

THE ODYSSEY
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE
BOOKS IX-XVI

J. W. MACKAIL

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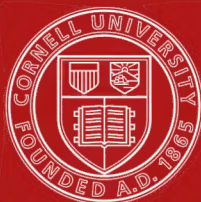
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THE ODYSSEY.

THE ODYSSEY

TRANSLATED BY

J. W. MACKAIL

BOOKS IX-XVI

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JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

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THE ODYSSEY

TRANSLATED BY J. W. MACKAIL

Books I-VIII

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THE ODYSSEY

BOOK NINTH

TALES OF ALCINOUS: THE STORY OF THE CYCLOPS

THEN subtle-souled Odysseus answering spoke :
“ O Prince Alcinous, lordliest of the folk,
Goodly it is to listen to such song
As now for our delight the minstrel woke ;

“ Whose voice is like a God’s own voice to hear ;
Since no joy truly I account more dear
Than when a people all keep festival,
And in the palace banqueters make cheer,

“ And listening to a minstrel sit arow,
By tables groaning meat and bread below,
While, passing down, the cup-bearer with wine
Poured from the bowl makes each man’s cup to flow.

THE ODYSSEY

“ No more than this I deem may man desire.
But now your heart has moved you to inquire
Concerning all my woeful miseries,
That my old sorrow may once more draw nigher.

“ Where shall I cease or whence begin to tell
Of all my many sorrows that befell
By disposition of the heavenly Gods ?
First then my name, that you may know it well,

“ I will declare, that I hereafter may,
Having escaped from out the evil day,
A friend of yours be reckoned, though from yours
The home wherein I dwell be far away.

“ Odysseus am I, of Laertes sprung,
Whose wiles mid all men pass from tongue to tongue
And my fame reaches heavenward ; and I dwell
In far-seen Ithaca the waves among.

“ Therein is one fair mountain clad with trees,
Neriton : and all around amid the seas
Nigh one another many isles are set,
Dulichium and Same, and by these

“ Wooded Zacynthus : but itself it lies
A lowland, out beneath the dusking skies
Far off to westward, but the rest apart,
Facing the dawning and the sun's uprise.

BOOK NINTH

“Rough is it, but the lads it rears are brave ;
And for my part naught sweeter might I crave
Than that same land of mine : but far from it
Calypso kept me in her vaulted cave,

“The bright of Goddesses amid the sea,
Desiring that her husband I should be ;
And likewise in her chambers perilous
The witch Aeaeon Circe prisoned me,

“Desiring me for husband : yet therein
The heart within my breast they could not win :
For sweeter than his parents and his home
Is naught, to him who far from his own kin

“Must sojourn among folk of alien name,
Though richly housed. Now I my tongue will frame
To tell of the most woeful home-going
That Zeus ordained me as from Troy I came.

“The wind that bore me from the Trojan strand
Brought me ashore on the Ciconian land
At Ismarus ; and there I sacked the town
And slew them, and for plunder to our hand

“Their wives and cattle from the city we
By shares among us parted equally.
Then hot-foot flight I counselled ; but the rest
In their great folly were not ruled by me.

THE ODYSSEY

“ So there much wine was drunken by my crew
And many sheep upon the shore they slew,
And hoofed and horned cattle. But the while
To the Ciconians the Ciconians drew,

“ Who were their neighbours, mightier of their hand
And more in number, in a trackless land
Having their home, and skilled to fight with men
From chariots, or at need afoot to stand.

“ Then came they on us in the mist of morn,
As leaves and blossoms that in spring are born
Innumerable: and an evil doom
Zeus wrought to overcome our host forlorn ;

“ Ordaining for our lot affliction sore :
So joining battle the swift ships before
They fought, and from men's hands the bronze-topped
Hurtled on either side across the shore. [spears

“ Then for a while, as long as morn was grey,
And through the increase of the sacred day,
Against them, though they far outnumbered us,
We held our ground and kept in our array.

“ But at the hour of the descending sun,
When from the plough the oxen are undone,
Back the Ciconians drove the Achaean host
And broke them, that escape we hardly won

BOOK NINTH

“ From death and doom: but of my mail-clad host
Six from each ship lay dead upon the coast.
Thence we sailed on, escaping glad from death,
Yet heart-sore for the comrades we had lost.

“ But ere my balanced ships put out from land,
My luckless fellows on the level strand
Each thrice I called upon by name, who there
Had fallen dead at the Ciconians' hand.

“ Now on the ships Zeus the Cloud-gatherer sent
A northern gale and tempest violent
That all in clouds together land and sea
Wrapped, and night swooped across the firmament.

“ With dipping prows they drove before the gale,
Till the wind's fury crosswise every sail
Rent into ribbons: then into the ships
The tackling we hauled down, in dread of bale ;

“ But the bare hulls we strongly rowing on
Drove forward to the mainland, and thereon
For two whole nights and two whole days we lay,
Worn out with travail and all woe-begone.

“ Till when the third day's fair-tressed Dawn was bright,
We hauled the masts up, and the sails of white
We hoisted and outspread, and sitting still
Let wind and helmsman guide their course aright.

THE ODYSSEY

“Then safe had I won home beyond a doubt,
But, as I wore Maleia’s head about,
North wind and tide and current pushed me off
Seaward, and past Cythera drove me out.

“Thence the winds bore me, blowing fierce and fell,
Across the fish-abounding ocean-swell
A nine days’ space : and on the tenth we reached
The land wherein the Lotus-eaters dwell,

“Who feed on flowery food : there landed we
And drew us water, and beside the sea
By the swift ships taking our midday meal
We drank and ate bread in sufficiency.

“Then of my crew I sent to bring me word,
Exploring inland, what they saw or heard
Of dwellers on the acres, choosing out
Twain, and a herald with them for the third.

“And straightway going forth, anigh they drew
The Lotus-eaters ; who against our crew
Devised not hurt, but gave them of the fruit
To taste upon the lotus-trees that grew.

“But whoso of them once began to eat
The lotus-fruit, that is as honey sweet,
Had no will longer in him to return
Or bring back tidings, but desired to fleet

BOOK NINTH

“ His days among the lotus-eating men,
Eating the lotus, nor return again.
Howbeit I drove them weeping to the ships,
And to the ships’ holds haled and bound them then

“ Under the benches : but I bade anon
My fellows to the swift ships get them gone
In haste, that none might of the lotus-fruit
Eat, and forget the way he went upon.

“ Straight they embarked, and sitting in array
Smote with their oars upon the water grey.
Thence sailing forward, heavy at our heart,
To the Cyclopes’ land we took our way :

“ A people proud, to whom no law is known ;
And, trusting to the deathless Gods alone,
They plant not and they plough not, but the earth
Bears all they need unfurrowed and unsown :

“ Barley and wheat, and vines whose mighty juice
Swells the rich clusters, when the rain of Zeus
Gives increase ; and among that race are kept
No common councils nor are laws in use.

“ But on the high peaks and the hillsides bare
In hollow caves they live, and each one there
To his own wife and children deals the law,
Neither has one of other any care.

THE ODYSSEY

“ Now on that coast an island makes a bar
Across a bay’s mouth, neither very far
From the Cyclopes’ land nor close to it :
And all about it tangled woods there are.

“ And there innumerable goats are bred ;
For no man’s footprint scares them, nor the tread
Of hunters with their hounds, who in the woods
Range, faring hard, on many a mountain-head.

“ No flocks are herded there, no crops are mown
From ploughlands, but unfurrowed and unsown
Through all the seasons it lies desolate
Of men, and pastures bleating goats alone.

“ For the Cyclopes have not ships at hand
Vermilion-cheeked, nor are there in the land
Ship-carpenters to fashion benched ships
That might avail to pass from strand to strand,

“ To all the cities of mankind that be ;
As men are wont on ships to cross the sea
One to another : by whose help they soon
Had made that island full of husbandry.

“ For no poor land it is, but fit to bear
All fruits in season, set with meadows fair,
Well-watered, soft, beside the grey sea-banks ;
And vines would flourish never-failing there.

BOOK NINTH

“ And level tilth it has, whence harvests deep
Men at the season evermore might reap,
So rich the soil is under ; and thereby
A haven, ships at anchorage to keep

“ Unmoored, not needing anchors to let go
Or mooring-cables from the stern to throw,
But to lie beached until the sailors' mind
Moves them to voyage, and the breezes blow.

“ But at the haven's head with water bright
A spring beneath a cavern leaps to light
Amid a grove of poplars. Thither we
Came sailing on, and through the darkling night

“ Some God directed us : for not a ray
Glimmered, but round the ships a thick mist lay,
And the moon shewed no light out of the sky,
But muffling clouds had hidden her away.

“ So that no outlook of the island told,
Nor the long waves upon the beach that rolled
Could we discern, until upon the strand
Our benched galleys grated and took hold.

“ And when they grounded, all the sails therefrom
We lowered, and on the edge of the sea-foam
Ourselves we disembarked and fell asleep,
And waited for the shining Dawn to come.

THE ODYSSEY

“But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
We went about the isle, and roamed thereon
Admiring ; and the nymphs, the maids of Zeus
The Lord of Thunder-clouds, aroused anon

“The wild goats of the upland, that my crew
Might banquet. Straightway from the ships we drew
Long-shafted javelins and bended bows,
And in three bands we chased them down and slew.

“Well was our hunting by God’s grace begun :
Twelve ships were with me, and to every one
There fell nine goats, and for my special share
Ten more. So all day long till set of sun

“We sat and feasted to our hearts’ content
On wine and venison, having still unspent
On shipboard the red wine, that into jars
We filled when we from the Ciconians went,

“After we took their sacred city high :
The while on the Cyclopes’ land so nigh
We looked, that we could see the smoke, and hear
Sheep and goats bleating, and the shepherds’ cry.

“Then the sun sank and darkness fell, and we
Slept there upon the margin of the sea.
But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
I made assembly of the company

BOOK NINTH

“Of my good crews, and spake among them so :
Abide now here, my fellows, while I go
With my own ship and crew to yonder land,
That of its folk I may inquire and know,

“If they be fierce and lawless, men of blood,
Or hospitable and of godly mood.
So saying, up into the ship I got
And bade my crew launch forth upon the flood.

“Then they cast off the moorings and straightway
Embarked, and on the benches in array
They took their seats, and sitting all arow
Smote with their oars upon the water grey.

“But as across the narrow strait we drew,
A cave upon the headland came in view,
High-vaulted, nigh the sea, with laurel trees
Shaded, and flocks about it not a few

“Of sheep and goats lay sleeping, and around
Were reared great boulders sunk into the ground
To make a courtyard wall, filled up between
With tall-stemmed pines and oak trees lofty-crowned.

“And there a giant man was wont to sleep,
Far and alone who shepherded his sheep,
Nor went among his fellows, choosing there
A lonely life in lawlessness to keep.

THE ODYSSEY

“Mighty of frame he was, a monster dread,
Not like a man of them who live on bread,
But like some wooded crag that high aloft
Among the mountains rears its lonely head.

“Then bade I all my trusty company
There by the ship abide, its guard to be,
Saving twelve only, whom myself I chose
Out of the best, to go ashore with me.

“But we upon that quest adventurous
A goatskin of the black wine took with us
That Maron gave to us, Euanthes' son,
Priest of Apollo guard of Ismarus :

“Because we spared him with his child and wife
And did him reverence ; for afar from strife
He dwelt in bright Apollo's wooded grove,
And princely gifts he gave me for his life.

“Seven talents weight he gave of gold most fine
And a great solid silver bowl ; and wine
He drew and filled twelve two-eared jars with it,
Sweet and unmixed, a potent drink divine.

“And to no man its hiding-place was known,
Not even thralls and servants of his own,
But only to himself and his own wife
And to a single housekeeper alone.

BOOK NINTH

“Whoso that red wine honey-sweet would sup
Filled out thereof and mixed a single cup
With twenty parts of water, and a scent
Of marvellous sweetness from the bowl went up.

“Then was the drinker eager to begin.
Now with that wine I filled an ample skin
And bore it with me ; and I took withal
A leathern bag with victual good therein.

“For in my valiant spirit I foresaw
Already some wild man anigh us draw ;
A savage, clad in overpowering strength,
And knowing naught of justice or of law.

“So to the giant’s cave apace came we,
Nor found him in it : for his fat sheep he
Was pasturing afield ; and we the cave
Entered, and looked about it curiously.

“With cheeses mats were full as they could hold,
And lambs and kids were crowded up in fold
All sorted separately, the first-born,
The halflings, and the young but few days old.

“And the wrought vessels that he milked in lay,
Both pails and pans, all brimming up with whey.
Then was the counsel of my fellows first
To lift some cheeses thence and go our way ;

THE ODYSSEY

“ And next, that opening the pens with speed
To the swift ship for plunder we should lead
The lambs and kids, and over the salt sea
Sail forth ; but to their words I gave not heed ;

“ As had been better far for them and me :
Being desirous his own self to see
And haply get gifts from him : but no joy
For my companions was that sight to be.

“ Then kindled we a fire below the rock
And sacrificed, and cheeses from his stock
We took and ate, and sat abiding him
Till he came on us shepherding his flock.

“ A monstrous faggot of dry wood he bore
For supper-firing, and on the cave-floor
Down with a clatter cast it ; and in dread
We huddled inward farther from the door.

“ But into the wide cave the fatted sheep
He drove, that he was wont for milk to keep,
But left their males, the he-goats and the rams,
Outside within the courtyard sunken deep.

“ Then a huge slab he lifted up and set
Against the doorway, such as labourers met
With two and twenty goodly four-wheeled wains,
All harnessed, from the threshold could not get.

BOOK NINTH

“ On the cave’s mouth that towering slab he slid,
And, sitting down his bleating flocks amid,
His ewes and his she-goats milked all in turn,
And set to each her suckling lamb or kid.

“ Half the white milk he curdled, and laid by
The curd in wicker frails to drain it dry,
And half he set in vessels to take up
And drink from when his supper-time drew nigh.

“ But when his task was finished and made good,
He lit a fire, and spied us where we stood,
And questioned us: Who are you, strangers? whence
Sail you across the pathways of the flood?

“ Over the seas on traffic do you sail,
Or cruising idly on a random trail
Like pirates, who at hazard of their lives
Wander, to outland people carrying bale?

“ So said he, and our hearts within us brake;
For his deep voice and his gigantic make
Wrought terror in us; notwithstanding then
I answered him and in these words I spake:

“ Achaeans are we, who from Troy for home
Sailing across the gulf of flood and foam,
Driven by variable winds astray,
On a strange road by paths unknown are come.

THE ODYSSEY

“ So Zeus belike ordained our lot to be :
And folk of Agamemnon’s host are we,
The son of Atreus ; highest in renown
Of all beneath the cope of heaven is he :

“ For that so great a city through and through
He sacked, and many folk thereunder slew.
Now to your knees in suppliant guise we come
Desiring hospitable fare of you,

“ Or that some other gift for us you frame
Such as the stranger of his right may claim.
Now therefore reverence the Gods, O prince,
Since we in suppliant wise before you came.

“ For to the suppliant Zeus is a defence
And to the stranger, and his name is thence
Protector of the Stranger ; and with such
He goes, and bids men do them reverence.

“ So said I, but he answered straight thereto
With ruthless heart : Belike a fool are you,
O stranger, or from far away have come,
Who bid me fear or shun what Gods can do.

“ For the Cyclopes heed of Zeus have none
The Thunder-bearer, nor of any one
Of the high Gods : too strong are we by far :
Nor would I, any wrath of Zeus to shun,

BOOK NINTH

“ You or your fellows from my hands let go
Unharmèd, except my own mind movèd me so.
But tell me where your well-wrought ship is moorèd
Far off or nigh at hand, that I may know.

“ So spake he with ensnaring mind, but me
Lured not from my exceeding subtlety ;
But answer I returnèd in guileful words :
My ship upon the rocks from out at sea

“ The Shaker of the Earth Poseidon drave
On your land’s edge, and brokè it, where the wave
Hurled it upon a reef before the gale :
But I with these escapèd the yawning grave.

“ So said I, and he answerèd not again
With ruthless heart, but leapt upon my men,
And at a single clutch a pair of them
Caught, and like puppies dashèd them on his den,

“ So that their brains were spatterèd on the floor,
Wetting the earth ; then limb from limb he tore,
And like a mountain lion supped on them
Devouring, and left nothing, less or more,

“ Entrails and flesh and marrowy bones ; while we
Hold up to God our hands most wretchedly,
Weeping to see such deeds of wickedness,
Helpless to succour their extremity.

THE ODYSSEY

“But when the Cyclops with the flesh of men
Had filled his ravening maw, and swallowed then
Great draughts of his raw milk, amid his flocks
He stretched him out to sleep within his den.

“Then, taking courage, my sharp sword I planned
To draw, and creeping nigh his breast to stand
And, feeling where the liver lies enwrapped,
Strike: but a second thought held back my hand.

“For there we likewise had been doomed to die,
Since our hands could not from the doorway high
Push the vast rock-slab he had laid on it:
So we abode bright Dawn with many a sigh.

“But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
His fire he kindled, and began anon
All in their turn to milk his goodly flocks,
And put her suckling under every one.

“But when his task was finished and made good,
Two more of us he caught and made his food:
And when his fast was broken, from the cave
Drove his fat flocks, lightly from where it stood

“Lifting the massy door-slab from the sill,
And laid it back the cavern-mouth to fill,
As on a quiver one would lay the lid:
And whistling drove his fat flocks to the hill.

BOOK NINTH

“ But I was left deep-brooding in my breast
Ill deeds, if haply vengeance I might wrest
And save my honour by Athena’s aid ;
And pondering, this device I found the best.

“ Lying beside a sheep-pen I had seen
The Cyclops’ club, a bough of olive green
That he had cut to carry it when dry ;
And to our mind the mast it might have been

“ In a black ship with twenty oars that plies,
Built broad of beam to carry merchandise
That crosses the great ocean ; such for length
And such for thickness was it to our eyes.

“ Standing beside it I cut off it then
A fathom’s length and passed it to my men,
Bidding them dress it down ; and they made smooth
The shaft and tapered it, while I again

“ Sharpening one end to a pointed head,
Set it to harden in the embers red ;
And hid it, thrusting it beneath the dung
That in great heaps about the cave lay spread.

“ Thereafter at my bidding lots they threw
Which should adventure with me of my crew
To lift the stake and thrust it in his eye
When sweet sleep took him ; and the four men drew

THE ODYSSEY

“ Whom I myself for that emprise to call
Had chosen, and myself the fifth withal.
Then came he driving from the pasturage
His goodly-fleeced flocks at evenfall.

“ Straightway he drove into the cavern blind
All his fat flock and left not one behind
In the deep courtyard, whether some intent
He planned, or God so wrought upon his mind.

“ Then high he lifted the great slab of stone
And blocked the door ; and sitting down alone
Milked all his ewes and bleating goats in turn,
And put her suckling under every one.

“ But when his task was finished and complete,
Two more he caught and made his evening meat.
Then I, a cup of dark wine in my hand,
Spake to the Cyclops, standing by his feet :

“ Lo here, O Cyclops, take and drink this cup
Since you have fared upon man's flesh to sup,
That you may know what drink our galley held :
An offering to you I brought it up,

“ That you might then have sped me on my way
In pity : but your rage can naught allay.
How shall another of the tribes of men
Approach you, after this ill deed to-day ?

BOOK NINTH

“ So said I, and he took the cup from me
And drank it off ; and right well pleased was he
With the sweet drink, and for a second draught
Asked me again : Now give me presently

“ Yet more of this, nor grudge it : and repeat
Your name, that I may give you guesting meet
To make you glad : for the Cyclopes’ land
Likewise among the acres of the wheat

“ Bears wine rich-clustered, when the rain of Zeus
Gives increase to us : but a branch cut loose
From the immortal deathless tree is this.
So said he ; and I poured the fiery juice

“ Again ; and thrice the cup to him gave I,
And thrice in witlessness he drained it dry.
Then in soft-flattering words I spake to him :
Cyclops, you ask the name men call me by :

“ That will I utter forth ; and likewise you
Give me a guest-gift as you sware to do.
Noman my name is ; Noman am I called
By them who bare me and by all my crew.

“ So said I ; and he answered me straightway
With ruthless heart: Then Noman shall my prey
Be after all his fellows, and they first :
This gift I give you as my guest to-day.

THE ODYSSEY

“These words he spake, and rolling backward leant,
Lying along, his thick neck sideways bent :
For sleep that conquers all laid hold on him :
While from his gullet jets of wine there went,

“And gobbets of man’s flesh mixed therewithal
That in his drunken vomit he let fall.
Then in the embers piled I thrust the stake
To heat it, cheering on my fellows all,

“That none might falter, but with courage good
Stand by : but when the stake of olive-wood
All through glowed fiercely, and began, though green,
To kindle, then amid the rest I stood,

“And pulled it from the fire and bore it nigh,
While in our hearts a God breathed courage high.
Then the sharp-pointed stake of olive-wood
They took and thrust it deep into his eye.

“And I leant hard above it, with a will
Twirling it round, as with a boring-drill
A man drills through the timbers of a ship
While two below him keep it running still,

“Handling the strap both ways to make it go
Backward and forward swiftly : even so
The fiery-pointed stake we twirled, and round
Its heated end the blood began to flow.

BOOK NINTH

“And all his lids and brows were scorched and marred
In the fierce vapour, as the eyeball charred
And the nerves shrank and crackled in the fire ;
And even as when a blacksmith, to make hard

“Broad axe or adze, in the cold water-flood
Dips it with hissing scream, (for that makes good
The strength of iron) tempering it : so
His eye hissed round the stake of olive-wood.

“Then from his lips a great and awful shout
Brake, that the rock-walls echoed round about,
And we in terror fled away, while he
The stake bespattered all with blood pulled out

“With both his hands and cast it far away,
And called out loudly, wallowing where he lay,
For help to the Cyclopes who in caves
Dwelt on the wind-swept headlands round the bay.

“Hearing him call, they came from far and nigh
And questioned him what ailed him, standing by
About the cave, and asked : What ails you so,
O Polyphemus, that aloud you cry,

“To break our sleep, through the immortal night ?
Is any mortal man in your despite
Driving away your flocks ? is any man
Slaying yourself, by treachery or by might ?

THE ODYSSEY

“ And mighty Polyphemus from the den
Answered : O friends, Noman it is of men
Slays me, by treachery nor by any might.
Then answered they in winged words again :

“ Now then if no man does you violence
And all alone you are, upon your sense
Some malady is come from Zeus on high,
Against the which there is no sure defence.

“ Then to your father, Lord Poseidon, pray
To heal you. So they said, and went their way.
But in my heart I laughed, because my name
And pure device had led him quite astray.

“ But racked with agony and groaning sore
The Cyclops, groping blindly to the door,
Took off the stone from it and sat him down
With outspread hands the cavern-mouth before ;

“ That aught among the sheep that issued he
Might pounce on : such a fool he reckoned me !
But I was planning how I best might deal
My fellows and myself from death to free.

“ And all my wisdom and my wiles I dressed,
Since the task was my very life to wrest
From swift and utter ruin : whereupon
This counsel to my mind appeared the best.

BOOK NINTH

“Males were there, waxen fat among the sheep,
Both great and goodly, clad with fleeces deep
Dusk as a violet: these in twisted withes
Pulled from the bed whereon was wont to sleep

“That monster, full of lawlessness and pride,
The Cyclops, three by three I caught and tied
Together, and the midmost bore a man,
While the two others went on either side,

“And held my fellows hid, that safely so
Beneath each three of them a man might go :
But I one ram, the foremost of the flock,
Caught round his back, and climbing up below,

“Close to his shaggy body clung with mine,
Twisting both hands amid his fleece divine,
And held on grimly with enduring heart :
So sighing we abode for Dawn to shine.

“But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
The males of all the flocks went forth anon
To pasture, but the females round the pens
Stayed bleating, for they long un milked had gone,

“And their swoln udders pained them. But their king,
Racked with fierce pangs, ran over fingering
The backs of all the sheep as up they stood
Before him : yet he noted not this thing,

THE ODYSSEY

“Fool, that beneath their woolly breasts they bore
Men bound. Then last among them to the door
The leader ram went pacing, laden down
With his thick fleece and me and all my lore.

“And mighty Polyphemus felt him go,
And said : O ram beloved, why so slow
Last through the cave’s mouth come you ? not your
It was behind the sheep to linger so. [wont

“But striding far before them in the mead
Upon the tender flowering grass you feed,
And first you reach the riverside, and first
The flock at evening to the fold you lead.

“Yet now you loiter last of all the line.
Surely for your protector’s eye you pine,
That with his cursed crew a evil man
Has blinded, having drugged my sense with wine:

“Noman, who has not yet methinks outrun
His doom ; but if your sense and mine were one,
And you could speak intelligible words,
To tell me where he lurks my wrath to shun,

“Once I had caught and dashed him to the ground,
His brains were spattered all the cave around,
And my heart lightened of the woes wherein
Noman, that man of naught, my life has bound.

BOOK NINTH

“So saying, out of doors the ram sent he :
And when from cave and courtyard gone were we
A little way, from underneath his fleece
I slipped out first, and then the rest cut free.

“Down to the ships we quickly drove thereat
The sheep, long-striding, thickly clad with fat,
Heading them off all round ; and when we came
To our good fellows a glad sight was that.

“Though when of those whom death had caught we told,
They wailed for sorrow : howbeit I controlled
Their tears, and silently with beckoning brows
Made signal to them into the ship’s hold

“The goodly-fleeced sheep in haste to throw,
And over the salt water back to go.
Then quickly up into the ship they got
And at the benches sat them down arow :

“And sitting at the benches in array
Smote with their oars upon the water grey.
But when I was so far as might be heard
A man’s voice crying out across the bay,

“With jeering words unto the Cyclops then
I cried aloud : Not helpless among men,
Cyclops, was he whose fellows you devoured
By brutal violence in your hollow den.

THE ODYSSEY

“ Surely your evil doings as was due,
O wretch, return on your own head anew,
Who shrank not from devouring in your house
The guests who sought you : wherefore now on you

“ Zeus and the Gods have taken vengeance thus.
So said I : and he yet more furious
Thereat, from the great hillside tore away
A spur of rock, and hurled it after us.

“ Just forward of the ship's blue prow it lit,
And the sea splashed up foaming where it hit :
And a great wave from seaward surging in
Bore the ship back and landward lifted it.

“ But seizing a long pole, the ship from shore
Out and away I thrust, and spake no more,
But, urgent that we might escape our death,
Beckoned my crew to lay them to the oar.

“ And bending forward they rowed mightily
Till we were distant twice the breadth of sea.
Then called I to the Cyclops, though all round
My fellows spake beseeching words to me :

“ Madman, why must you needs that savage dread
Stir up to rage ? But now his bolt he sped
Into the sea and drove our ship aback
Landward, and there were we as good as dead.

BOOK NINTH

“ And had he heard a voice or sound of speech,
Hurling a jagged rock from off the beach
He would have smashed our heads together then
And the ship’s planks, so long is he of reach.

“ So spake they, but my valiant heart afire
They overbore not : but in wrath and ire
I flung back answer : Cyclops, if perchance
Of mortal men one coming shall inquire

“ Of this your blinding and your shame, then tell
That he from whom your eyesight’s loss befell
Was I, Odysseus, stormer of the town,
Laertes’ son, in Ithaca who dwell.

“ So said I, and he groaned and answering spake :
Alas for me, whom sayings overtake
Uttered of old by oracles : for here
A man of noble mind and goodly make

“ Dwelt once, a prophet, Telemus by name,
Eurymus’ son, most excellent in fame
For prophecies, and prophesying thus
Among us to a great old age he came.

“ He told me of this fate ordained for me
In future, blinded of my sight to be
At one Odysseus’ hands : but alway I
Some mighty man and goodly thought to see

THE ODYSSEY

“Come hither, clad in overmastering might :
And now a weakling, small of size and slight,
Me of my eye has blinded, when with wine
He had my senses overmastered quite.

“Come hither now, Odysseus, that I may
Gifts that befit the guest before you lay,
And ask the glorious Shaker of the Earth
To give you convoy as you go your way.

“His son I am, and for my father he
Vouches him ; and if such his pleasure be,
Himself shall heal me, and none else of Gods
In heaven, or men who share mortality.

“So said he, but I answered him and spake :
Now would to God so surely I could make
You of your life-days and your life bereft
And send to the Dark House your way to take,

“As now the eyesight I have reft from you
Not even the Shaker of the Earth anew
Shall render. So I said ; but both his hands
Up to the sky beset with stars he threw,

“And to the prince Poseidon thus prayed he :
Blue-haired Poseidon, hearken now to me,
Circler of Earth, if thine indeed I am,
And if my father thou dost vouch to be :

BOOK NINTH

“Grant that this man may never reach again
His house, at home in Ithaca to reign,
Laertes’ son, the stormer of the town,
Odysseus. Yet if destiny ordain

“That he must see his country and his kin
And house well-builded, wretched may he win
His home and late, with all his fellows lost,
On a strange ship, and find ill hap therein.

“So prayed he ; and the blue-haired deity
Heard : but a second stone uplifted he
Far bigger than the first, and whirled it round
With giant force and launched it at the sea.

“Aft of the blue-prowed ship anigh it lit
And little failed the steering-oar to hit.
But the wave surging where the great rock fell
Drove the ship on, and shoreward lifted it.

“But when we reached the island, where the array
Of all my other benched galleys lay,
And by them sat the crews expecting us
Making great moan, upon a sandy bay

“We ran the ship abeach, and out we got,
And from the hollow ship, delaying not,
We took the Cyclops’ sheep and parted them
To give an equal share to each man’s lot.

THE ODYSSEY

“ But to me singly for my private share
The goodly ram my mail-clad fellows bare.
And him I slew and burned the thigh-pieces
To Cronus’ son, the High Protector, there,

“ Zeus the Cloud-darkener, for his grace to plead.
Yet of my sacrifice he took not heed,
But brooded how he wholly might destroy
My benched ships and fellows good at need.

“ So all day long till sunset there sat we
Feasting on flesh and wine abundantly :
And when the sun had set, and darkness fell,
We slept beside the margent of the sea.

“ But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
I called my fellows, bidding them be gone
Into the ship, and from her stern cast loose
The hawsers. Up her side they got anon,

“ And sitting at the benches in array
Smote with their oars upon the waters grey.
Thence we sailed forth, escaping glad from death,
But heartsick for our fellows cast away.

BOOK TENTH

CONCERNING AEOLUS AND THE LAESTRYGONIANS AND CIRCE

“AND next to the Aeolian isle we came
Where dwelt the son of Hippotes, by name
Aeolus, dear to the immortal Gods,
Upon his floating island ; round the same

“A brazen rampart all about goes clear
Unbroken, and the cliff runs upward sheer.
Twelve children in his halls were born to him,
Six daughters, and six sons of goodly cheer.

“The daughters to the sons he gave to wife ;
And now they sit at banquet all their life
By their own father and their mother sage,
And round about them all good things are rife.

“There all day long through hall and courtyard fleet
The sound of music and the steam of meat ;
And nightlong upon mortised bedsteads, hung
With tapestries, their wedded sleep is sweet.

THE ODYSSEY

“Now to their town and goodly house came we;
Where for a whole month he befriended me,
Asking of Troy and of the Argive ships
And the Achaeans’ journey oversea.

“Then first and last I told him all the tale;
But when I was desirous forth to sail
And bade him give me sending, he denied
Nothing, but order took for my avail.

“A skin flayed off an ox of nine years old
He gave me, wherein were bound fast in hold
The pathways of the blustering winds; for he
By ordinance of Cronus’ son controlled

“The winds within his treasury, their blast
To lull or wake at will: them made he fast
In the ship’s hold with a bright silver cord
So that not one least breath might issue past:

“But the west wind let loose for me to blow
That we and all our ships might lightly go
Before it: yet it was not so to be,
For our own heedless folly brought us low.

“So for a nine days’ space both day and night
We held our course, and with the tenth day’s light
Appeared the acres of our native land
And coastwise-kindled beacons came in sight.

BOOK TENTH

“Then sweet sleep overcame me wearied sore :
For the main sheet I handled evermore
Nor yielded it to any of my crew,
That sooner we might reach our native shore.

“But in their talk a word began to spring
Among my crew, how I was carrying
Silver and gold as gifts from Aeolus,
Hippotes’ son, the mighty-hearted king.

“And looking on his neighbour each to each
They murmured, and thus uttered envying speech :
Alack, how dear and precious to all men
Is he, to whatso land and town he reach !

“Since many a lovely treasured thing for prey
He carries, while from Troy he takes his way :
And we, who travelled the same road as he,
Go to our home with empty hands to-day.

“And Aeolus now in love and charity
Has given him this ; now make we haste to spy
What he has here, and what the treasures are
Of gold and silver in the bag that lie.

“So spake they, and as evil counsel bid
My comrades followed, and the bag undid.
Then forth rushed all the winds, and the hurricane
Caught up and whirled them out the seas amid.

THE ODYSSEY

“ Then weeping sore, afar into the deep
They saw their own land melt: but I from sleep
Awoke, and in my heart I knew not guilt,
But doubted whether overboard to leap

“ And perish in the sea, or yet to stay
Holding my peace, and to abide my day,
Enduring: yet abode I and endured,
And with head covered in the ship I lay :

“ While back to the Aeolian island sped
The ships by that foul tempest buffeted,
My fellows wailing round me: then ashore
We came, and drawing water, there we fed

“ By the swift ships: and thus we brake our fast
And ate bread and drank water ; then at last
Taking a herald and one other man
For fellows, to the glorious house I passed.

“ And Aeolus in it banqueting we found
Still, while his wife and children sat around.
Beside the doorposts on the threshold we
Sat down, and they made question, all astound :

“ How now, Odysseus, wherefore come you so ?
What God's displeasure thus has wrought you woe ?
Full courteously we sent you, so that you
To house and home and all you love might go.

BOOK TENTH

“So spake they, but I answered thereunto,
Heavy at heart, and spake: My evil crew
Did me this damage, and accursed sleep.
Heal it, O friends: for power you have in you.

“So spake I in soft moving words; and they
Were dumb, until their sire made answer: Nay,
Begone out of the island suddenly,
Most blameful of all men alive this day!

“Furtherance or convoy I may give no more
To him whom thus the blessed Gods abhor.
Begone, for hated of the Gods you came.
So saying, he drove us weeping out of door.

“And onward thence we sailed with hearts forlorn;
And with hard rowing were the men outworn,
Since now no convoy had we, and to us
By our own folly this distress was borne.

“Sailing a six days' space we kept our way
Both day and night, and on the seventh day
We came to Lamus' fortress on the rock,
Telepylus in Laestrygonia.

“The shepherd to the shepherd calls therein
As one drives out his flock and one drives in,
And the other hears him call: and there a man
Who never slept a double wage might win,

THE ODYSSEY

“ One herding cattle, and one milk-white sheep,
So near do night and day their pathways keep.
There made we a fair haven, that around
Is girdled by a rock-wall sheer and steep ;

“ Where jutting headlands run into the bay
Facing each other, and between them lay
A narrow channel. There the balanced ships
Steered in and anchored all in close array,

“ Within the hollow haven, overswept
By no wave great or small, but round them slept
The gleaming water : I alone without
My black ship by the utmost headland kept,

“ Moored from the cliff's edge ; and the prospect round
From a high craggy peak I searched, and found
No trace of works of oxen or of men ;
But we saw smoke upcurling from the ground.

“ Then of my crew I sent to bring me word,
Exploring inland, what they saw or heard
Of dwellers on the acres, choosing out
Twain, and a herald with them for the third.

“ Inland they went on a smooth track whereby
Wagons hauled timber from the hilltops high
Down to the city ; drawing water there
They lighted on a girl the walls anigh ;

BOOK TENTH

“The daughter of the Laestrygonian king
Antiphates, who to the bubbling spring
Artacia had descended, whence the folk
Were wont their water to the town to bring.

“And coming near they questioned her anon
Who was that country's lord and reigned thereon.
And straightway to her father's high-roofed house
She pointed them : and thither being gone

“They entered, and within the lordly hall
His wife they found, as some hill-summit tall,
A sight of horror. But her husband she
Out of the market-place made haste to call,

“The lord Antiphates, who there and then
Dealt horrible destruction to my men.
For catching one, he made his meal of him,
While the two others to the ships again

“Fled at their swiftest : but he raised a shout
Across the city, and from all about,
Hearing his cry, the mighty Laestrygons
In crowds innumerable sallied out,

“Like giants, not like mortal men to view ;
And from the cliffs' edge mighty rocks they threw,
Then awful was the noise that rose at once
From ships they splintered, and from men they slew.

THE ODYSSEY

“ And spearing them like fishes where they lay
They bore them for their loathly meal away,
And utterly destroyed them thus entrapped
Within the deep-recessed harbour bay.

“ But from my thigh the sharp sword forth I drew,
And cut the mooring-cables of the blue
Ship's prow, and bade my men most urgently
Lie to the oars and save us : and the crew

“ In mortal terror all the brine uptossed.
So from beneath that beetling rockbound coast
Gladly escaped my ship to the open sea,
But all the rest together there were lost.

“ Thence we sailed onward, joyful to have fled
With life, but for our fellows perished
Grieving at heart : then came we to the isle
Aeaea, where abode a Goddess dread,

“ Circe, of mortal speech and tresses fair,
Who is own sister to the Sorcerer
Aeetes. These the world-enlightening Sun
Begot, and she the twain of them that bare

“ Was Perse, daughter to Oceanus.
Thereon we made our landfall, gliding thus
Into a sheltered haven on the coast
Without a sound, and some God guided us.

BOOK TENTH

“Then out to land we got, and lay thereon
Weary with travail and all woe-begone
For two whole days and nights ; but when the third
Day’s fair-tressed Dawning broadened out and shone,

“Quickly I took my sharp knife and my spear,
And from the ship clomb where a hill rose clear
Giving wide prospect, if I haply thence
Might see men’s tillage or men’s voices hear.

“So to the craggy peak I clomb and turned,
And rising off the wide-wayed earth discerned
Through the thick oaken coppice and the wood
Smoke from the fire in Circe’s house that burned.

“Now when I saw that gleaming smoke below,
I counselled in my mind to search and know
What it should mean ; but in my pondering
Better it seemed that first I back should go

“To the swift ship, and there on the seashore
Give my men food and send them to explore.
But to the balanced ship as I drew nigh
Alone, some God on me compassion bore ;

“And a stag right across my pathway sent,
Huge and high-antlered. To a stream he went
Down from his forest pasturage to drink ;
For the sun’s heat on him was vehement.

THE ODYSSEY

“ Him, as he issued from the wood to view,
On the mid-spine I smote, and through and through
The bronze spear pierced his back, and in the dust
Sobbing he fell, and forth his spirit flew.

“ But I bestrode him and from out the wound
Pulled the bronze spear and left it on the ground
To lie, and plucking brush and willow-twigs,
A fathom's length of rope I twisted round,

“ Well-plaited, and tied up and lifted clear
Therewith all four feet of the monstrous deer,
And so to the black ship across my neck
Made shift to bear it, leaning on my spear :

“ For on my shoulder I could bear nowise
Propped with one hand a beast so huge of size.
Thereat before the ship I cast him down
And called upon my fellows to arise ;

“ And in soft words to each one spake I so :
O friends, albeit full heavy is our woe,
Not yet before the day predestinate
Shall we go down to the Dark House below.

“ Come then, while in the swift ship drink and meat
Remains yet, let us not forget to eat,
Lest we be pined with famine. So I said ;
And they gave ear and stood upon their feet,

BOOK TENTH

“ And by the shore of the unfruitful sea
Looked on the stag ; for a huge beast was he.
But when with gazing they were satisfied
They washed their hands and feasted plenteously.

“ So then till sunset feasting all the day
On sweet wine and abundant flesh we lay,
And when the sun had set and the dusk fell,
We slept upon the margent of the bay.

“ But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
I made assemblage of my crew anon
And spake among them: Hearken to my words,
Fellows and friends of mine, though woe-begone.

“ Since here our sight can no assurance bring
Where the dawn is, and where the evening,
Nor where the world-enlightening sun goes down
Under the earth or has his uprising :

“ Let us take counsel quickly as may be,
If yet device be left us ; and for me
I deem that none is left ; since all around
This isle I saw the immeasurable sea,

“ From the hill top whereon I clomb and stood,
Engirdling, and itself amid the flood
Lies low ; but in the midmost I discerned
Smoke rising through the thickets and the wood.

THE ODYSSEY

“So said I ; and their hearts to water ran,
Antiphates the Laestrygonian
Remembering, and that iron-hearted one,
The Cyclops fierce, who ate the flesh of man.

“Shrilly they wept and from their eyes amain
The teardrops fell ; yet naught might they attain
By all their lamentation : wherefore I
Divided all my mailclad men in twain,

“And set a captain over either crew,
Eurylochus, a goodly man to view,
And my own self ; and in a brazen helm
We twain cast lots, and the first lot he drew.

“Straightway Eurylochus high-hearted then
Set forth, and with him two and twenty men
Weeping, and us in dolour left behind.
And they on a wide clearing in a glen

“Found Circe’s palace, built of polished stone,
And round it no man was, but beasts alone,
Hill-wolves and lions, over whom the witch
With evil drugs had her enchantment thrown.

“Nor sprang they at the men, but round them they
Ramped fawning with their outstretched tails asway,
Even as when the master from a meal
Rises, his dogs about him fawning play :

BOOK TENTH

“ For thence his wont it is some scraps to bring
To appease their maw : so round them in a ring
Fawned then the lions and the strong-clawed wolves ;
While they in terror saw so strange a thing.

“ And now upon the fair-tressed Goddess’ floor
They stood, and from her porches through the door
Heard Circe singing sweetly, as within
She wrought, the deathless high-built loom before,

“ As works of Goddesses are wont to be,
A web thin, lovely, wonderful to see.
Then silence brake Polites, prince of men,
Most lief and dear of all my crew to me :

“ Lo, friends, within, before the loom built high,
A Goddess or a woman, who thereby
Sings sweetly, that around her all the floor
Echoes : now make we haste on her to cry.

“ So said he : and they called aloud and cried,
Then issuing forth she straight threw open wide
The shining doors and called them ; and they all
Went in their folly trooping at her side.

“ Only Eurylochus held back : for he
Suspected in his heart some treachery.
She led them in and set them down arow
And mixed with Pramnian wine, their drink to be,

THE ODYSSEY

“ Cheese and pale honey and barley-flour withal,
But in the flour a baleful drug let fall
To make them quite forget their native land,
And gave it, and they took and drank it all.

“ Then straight she smote them with the wand she bore,
And penned them in the styes ; and now they wore
The heads and voice and bristled body of swine
But kept their senses perfect as before.

“ Thus weeping they were pent, and at their feet
Circe threw mast and acorns for their meat
And berries of the cornel, such as swine
That sleep upon the ground are wont to eat.

“ But to the swift black ship on the sea-brim
Eurylochus bore back the tidings grim
Of his companions and their dismal fate ;
Yet grief of mind so sore had smitten him,

“ No word might issue from his eager tongue
For anguish great wherewith his heart was wrung ;
And his eyes overbrimmed with tears, while we
Around him in amazement questioning hung.

“ Then their undoing thus recounted he :
Up through the oakwood as you bade went we,
Princely Odysseus, and amid the glades
We found a house of polished masonry,

BOOK TENTH

“Framed in fair wise upon a clearing wide,
And one within it the great loom who plied,
A Goddess or a woman, and she sang
Shrilly before it: upon her they cried.

“Then issuing forth she straight wide open threw
The shining doors and summoned in our crew;
And they behind her in their folly trooped
Together; but myself aback I drew,

“For my mind deemed some treachery was meant:
So all together out of sight they went,
Nor did a single one appear again,
Though long I sat and watched with eyes intent.

“He spake: but round my shoulders I anon
The great bronze silver-studded sword slung on,
And took my bow, and bade him lead me back
The selfsame way that they at first had gone.

“But he with either hand about my knee
Clung, and besought me, saying thus to me
In lamentable wise: Compel me not
Thither, O high-born one, but let me be.

“For well I know, not thence return you may,
Nor any of your fellows bring away.
Now rather make we haste with these to fly
While yet we may escape the evil day.

THE ODYSSEY

“So spake he ; but I answered back once more :
Eurylochus, abide you on the shore
Eating and drinking by the black ship’s hold,
But I am going ; for the need is sore.

“So saying, from the ship-side and the sea
Inland I went alone, and presently
Up the enchanted glades I drew anigh
To the great house of Circe’s sorcery.

“But as I drew anigh it, in that place
Gold-wanded Hermes met me face to face,
In likeness of a youth when the first down
Fledges his lip in earliest manhood’s grace.

“He caught my hand and spake a word and so
Accosted me : Ah, whither do you go
Across the wolds, O man unfortunate,
Alone amid a land you do not know ?

“Your fellows here in Circe’s palace pine,
Close-barred and prisoned in the shape of swine ;
And come you hither to release them ? Nay,
Yourself you shall not save, as I divine ;

“But there have your abiding even as they :
Yet will I save you, and your woes will stay.
Here, take this virtuous drug to Circe’s house,
That from your head shall ward the evil day.

BOOK TENTH

“ Now will I tell you all the sorceries
That she for your undoing shall devise.
A potion she will mix with poisoned meal,
Yet shall bewitch you not in anywise.

“ For that the good drug shall forbid that I
Will give you, telling all its property.
When Circe smites you with her outstretched rod,
Draw out the sharp sword from beside your thigh,

“ And leap at her as if intent to slay ;
Then terror-stricken she will cower away,
And bid you to her bed ; refuse not then
The bed she gives, nor say a Goddess nay ;

“ That she may give you entertainment fair
And set your fellows free ; but bid her swear
By the great oath that binds the blessed Gods
No further harm against you to prepare :

“ Lest, once disarmed, she unman you and undo.
So spake the Shining One, and forthwith drew
Out of the earth that drug, and in my hand
Laid it, and shewed me in what sort it grew.

“ Black was the root, the blossom milky white,
And the Gods call it moly ; mortal wight
Would have hard work to dig it from the ground ;
Howbeit the power of Gods is infinite.

THE ODYSSEY

“Thereafter to far-off Olympus he
Passed from the island set with many a tree,
But I to Circe’s house ; and as I went
Many a thing my heart revolved in me.

“Then by the fair-tressed Goddess’ portals nigh
I stood and called her, and she heard my cry,
And issuing forth at once, flung open wide
The glittering doors and called me in : and I

“Followed as one who goes his doom to meet :
Forthwith she led me in, and on a seat
Fair, carven, silver-studded, set me down
And laid a footstool underneath my feet.

“Then in a golden cup compounded she
A spiced brewage for my drink to be,
And in it dropped a potion, counselling
My bane within her heart, and gave it me.

“But when I took and drank it from her hand
And yet was unenchanted, with her wand
She smote me, and spake out and said : Begone
Now to the sty and couch among your band.

“So said she : but the sharp sword from my thigh
I drew, and leapt at Circe suddenly
As purposing to slay her ; and she shrieked
Aloud, and under it ran in anigh,

BOOK TENTH

“And caught my knees, and winged words anew
She uttered : Who and whence of men are you ?
Where is the city of your ancestry ?
I marvel greatly how this cup I brew

“You drink, and yet its sorcery have withstood :
For unbewitched has none of mortal brood
Drunk of it yet or let it pass his lips ;
But your breast holds against bewitchment good.

“Wandering Odysseus truly you must be,
Who in his swift black ship across the sea
Ever the golden-wanded Shining One
Said should from Troy returning visit me.

“Now lay your sword into the sheath again,
And to the bed ascend we, for us twain
Arrayed, that having lain and loved therein
Each to the other faithful may remain.

“So said she : but I spake and made reply :
What is this bidding, Circe ? how should I
Be gentle with you, who have turned my men
Under your roof to swine within the sty ?

“And here you hold me, and your mind has planned
In guile to make me in your chamber stand
And to your bed ascend, that there disarmed
Lying I may be broken and unmanned.

THE ODYSSEY

“Nay, on your bed my foot I will not set
Except your word I first prevail to get,
Sealed by a mighty oath, that for my harm
You will not frame some other practice yet.

“So spake I, and she straightway, nothing loth,
Swore as I bade her ; but when she the oath
Had sworn and ended, to the goodly bed
I went with Circe and it held us both.

“But meanwhile through the palace busily
Went the four handmaids that her servants be
Therein, who are of groves and fountains born
And holy rivers running to the sea :

“The first of whom began on chairs to throw
Fair purple rugs, and linen cloths below
Spread : and the second silver tables drew
Before the chairs, and set them out arow

“With golden baskets: and the third fetched up
A silver bowl and mixed for us to sup
The sweet wine honey-scented, and set forth
Before each place a golden drinking-cup :

“And the fourth carried water in and lit
A fire, and in a great pot over it
Set water on to heat ; and when it boiled
Within the gleaming bronze, she made me sit

BOOK TENTH

“ Into a bath, and out of the great pot,
Mixing cold water to allay the hot,
Sluiced down my head and shoulders, till my limbs
Their spirit-sickening weariness forgot.

“ But having bathed me and anointed me
With oil of olive, round my body she
Drew a fair cloak and shirt, and led me in
And set me on a seat right fair to see,

“ Carven and silver-studded, for my feet
Setting a stool below, and bade me eat.
But it misliked me, and I sat with mind
Brooding on ill, and thought not on my meat.

“ But Circe, when she marked me sit and brood
Grieving, nor reach my hands out to her food,
Came up to me and spake a winged word :
Why sit you thus, Odysseus, dull of mood,

“ Even as one speechless, making evil cheer ?
Nor do your hands to meat and drink draw near.
Fear you some treachery yet ? an oath of might
I swore to you ; no need you have to fear.

“ So said she : but I spake and made reply :
Bethink you, Circe, in what wise might I
Or any man in reason be content
With meat and drink his heart to satisfy,

THE ODYSSEY

“ Ere from their doom his fellows he had freed
And with his eyes beheld them ? If indeed
You bid me eat and drink, release them now
That I may see my fellows good at need.

“ So spake I, and thereat immediately
Out through the palace, rod in hand, went she,
And opened the sty-doors and drave them out
Resembling swine of nine years old to see.

“ Thereafter all in front of her stood they,
While she passed down along their whole array,
Smearing another drug on each of them ;
And off their limbs the bristles fell away,

“ That the first baleful drug from Circe’s store
Had made to grow upon them ; and once more
Men they became, and younger were to see
And taller far and goodlier than before.

“ Then knew they me, and round my hands they clung,
Wailing for strong desire their heart that stung ;
And round them rang the house in wondrous wise,
That even the Goddess was to pity wrung.

“ Thereat the bright of Goddesses to me
Drew nigh and spake : Laertes’ son, said she,
Subtle high-born Odysseus, go your way
To the swift ship and margent of the sea.

BOOK TENTH

“There first make haste to haul up high and dry
Your ship, and into the sea-caves lay by
Her tackling and her lading ; then return,
Bringing with you your trusty company.

“So said she, and with courage well content
To the swift ship and the seashore I went,
And by the swift ship found my trusty crew
In lamentation and in languishment :

“While from their eyes the big tears fell away.
Even as calves amid the farmyard play
Around their mothers coming back to fold
When they have grazed their fill at close of day ;

“And from the folding-pens they overflow
And lowing loudly round their mothers go ;
Thus, when their eyes beheld me, round me they
Pressed weeping : and it seemed them even so

“As if to their own land and city led
They saw the isle where they were born and bred,
Rough Ithaca ; and in lamenting wise
Accosting me, in winged words they said :

“Such joy, O prince, within our heart there grew
At your return, as though we saw anew
Our native Ithaca ; but forth and tell
Of the destruction that befell our crew.

THE ODYSSEY

“ So said they ; but in soothing words reply
I uttered : First of all now high and dry
Let us haul up the ship, and into caves
Her tackling and her lading all lay by.

“ Then make you haste to come along with me
Where you in Circe’s holy house shall see
Eating and drinking all our fellowship :
For there of all they have sufficiency.

“ So said I, and on them the words I spoke
Wrought swift assurance : but among the folk
Eurylochus alone held back the rest,
And answered and in winged words outbroke :

“ Ah wretched, whither go we ? why to-day,
As fain to perish, do you take your way
To Circe’s palace, who will turn us all
To swine or wolves or lions, there to stay

“ Prisoners within her mighty palace pent ?
Thus did the Cyclops when our fellows went
Into his court, and with them went the rash
Odysseus, by whose folly they were shent.

“ So said he : but within debated I
Whether I should not, drawing from my thigh
The straight-edged sword, smite off his head to earth,
Though to my own blood he was kinsman nigh.

BOOK TENTH

“ But round me all, my anger to allay,
Came with soft speech : O high-born one, said they,
Here, if so please you, will we leave this man
To keep the ship and by the ship to stay.

“ Lead on to Circe’s holy house, and we
Will follow you. So saying, from the sea
Inland they went ; nor did Eurylochus
Abide by the ship’s hold, but presently

“ Came on behind us ; for his heart was stirred
To terror by my wrathful threatening word.
But Circe to the others in her house
In courteous wise the while had ministered ;

“ And bathed them and anointed them again
With oil of olive, and about them then
Laid thick-fleeced cloaks and shirts for covering :
So that we coming thither found our men

“ All feasting well upon her palace floor ;
And when they each on other looked once more,
And spake to one another face to face,
They fell to weeping and to wailing sore,

“ That round about the palace in the wood
Rang shrill : then spake, anigh me as she stood,
The bright of Goddesses : O high-born one,
Laertes’ son, Odysseus subtle of mood,

THE ODYSSEY

“No longer let the heavy tears downflow,
You nor your fellows : for myself I know
What sorrows you have suffered in the deep
Wherein the fishes travel to and fro :

“And likewise what the hands of hostile men
Of scathe on land have dealt you : sojourn then
Here with me, eating food and drinking wine
Till the heart rise within your breasts again

“As when at first you from your home were lorn,
Rough Ithaca : but feeble now and worn
With long hard wanderings are you, and your hearts
Forget all gladness ; for you much have borne.

“So spake she, and our valiant hearts their fear
Put quite away ; and till the circling year
To its fulfilment came, we sitting there
Made with sweet wine and plenteous flesh good cheer.

“But when the year was past, and round had sped
The seasons, as the months were minished
And the long days were numbered out, once more
My trusty fellows called me forth and said :

“O master, take the journey now in hand
Homeward, if truly by the Gods' command
Your needs must save your soul alive and reach
Your high-roofed house and your own native land.

BOOK TENTH

“ So said they, and my valiant spirit they
Won to their will : so there the livelong day
Making good cheer with many joints of meat
And with sweet wine till set of sun we lay.

“ But when the sun set and the dusk drew on,
And they within the shadowy halls were gone
To slumber, I to Circe’s lovely bed
Went up, and falling at her knees thereon,

“ Besought her (and the Goddess heard me pray),
And thus in winged words began to say :
O Circe, now fulfil your promise sworn
To give me convoy on my homeward way.

“ Now I and all my crew to part are fain ;
Who tire my heart as round me they complain
When you are not among us. Thus I said,
And straightway spake the Goddess bright again :

“ Son of Laertes, manifold of skill,
High-born Odysseus, not against your will
You and your fellows longer shall abide
Within my house : but first must you fulfil

“ Another journey yet, the house to see
Of Hades and renowned Persephone ;
To make inquiry of the Theban ghost
That was Tiresias when on earth was he ;

THE ODYSSEY

“The prophet blind, who senses of his own
Keeps perfect, since in death to him alone
Persephone has understanding given,
Where all the rest are drifting shadows blown.

“So spake she ; but my heart was rent in me,
And sitting on the bed I bitterly
Wept, and no longer did my soul desire
To live or yet the light of day to see.

“But when with tears and tossing to and fro
I was aweary, I made answer so :
O Circe, who shall guide me on this road ?
For to the Dark House no black ship may go.

“So said I ; and thus answering straight begun
The shining Goddess : O Laertes’ son,
High-born Odysseus subtle-souled, hereof
Take no concern, for pilot need you none.

“Hoist but your mast and spread the sails of white,
And sitting let the North wind’s breath aright
Bear her : but when on shipboard you have crossed
The Ocean River, there will come in sight

“The tangled groves of Queen Persephone,
A low shore set with the tall poplar tree
And willow that untimely sheds her fruit :
There run your ship abeach out of the sea,

BOOK TENTH

“ Beside the Ocean-stream’s deep-eddy flow,
And to the mouldering house of Hades go
Afoot, where into Acheron disgorge
The Fiery Torrent and the Stream of Woe,

“ That is from the Abhorred Water split,
Where a rock stands and where meet under it
The two loud-thundering rivers: there, O prince,
I bid you go close up and dig a pit

“ A cubit’s measure either way, and pour
Round it drink-offering all the dead before,
With milk and honey first, and with sweet wine
Thereafter, and with water yet once more :

“ And on it strew white barley-flour withal,
And then with prayer and supplication call
The strengthless people of the dead with vows
To slay a barren heifer in your hall,

“ Your best, when you to Ithaca shall go,
And precious things upon the fire to throw,
And a black sheep, the goodliest of the flock,
Apart upon Tiresias to bestow.

“ But when the lordly nations of the dead
With vows and prayers you have propitiated,
Then with two sheep, a ram and a black ewe,
Make your oblation, turning down their head

THE ODYSSEY

“ Into the darkness ; and yourself thereon
With eyes averted set your face upon
The current of the River : then will come
Flocking the phantoms of folk dead and gone.

“ Then straitly order them who stand around
Those sheep that lay sword-slaughtered on the ground
To flay and burn, and call upon the Gods,
Strong Hades and Persephone renowned.

“ And you, the sharp sword drawing from your thigh,
Sit there, and let not to the blood anigh
The strengthless people of the dead approach,
Ere of Tiresias you have won reply.

“ Then straightway shall the prophet come and shew,
Prince of the people, where your path must go
From point to point, and how you shall return
Across the sea where fish go to and fro.

“ So spake she, and Dawn straightway rose and shone
Gold-throned ; and in my shirt and cloak anon
I clad me, and the nymph herself a great
White mantle, thin and beautiful, put on ;

“ And round her loins a golden girdle fair
She drew, and cast a kerchief on her hair :
But I throughout the house to every man
Went with soft words, and bade my crew prepare :

BOOK TENTH

“No longer now in drowsy slumber sweet
Sleep on, but set we to the road our feet ;
Circe the Queen thus bids us. So said I ;
And in their valiant hearts they thought it meet.

“Yet notwithstanding not unscathed I drew
My fellows thence. One was there of my crew,
Elpenor, very young, nor much in war
Of valiance, nor of wise advice he knew.

“He, where the empty roof some coolness kept
In Circe’s house enchanted, lay and slept,
Heavy with wine ; and when he heard the noise
And bustle of men stirring, up he leapt,

“Startled, and quite forgot aback to go
By the long ladder to the ground, and so
Fell headlong from the roof and brake his neck,
And his soul fled to the Dark House below.

“Then spake I, as they went upon their way,
A word among them : Now belike you say
To your own native land and home you go :
But Circe points another path to-day,

“Bidding our journey to the house be bound
Of Hades and Persephone renowned ;
That of the ghost who was Tiresias
On earth, the Theban, counsel may be found.

THE ODYSSEY

“So spake I, and their heart in them was rent,
And sitting down they made a loud lament
And tore their hair ; yet notwithstanding all
Their mourning no device might they invent.

“But when at last the margent of the sea
And the swift ship we reached, in misery,
While from our eyes the heavy teardrops ran,
Circe, before us gone invisibly,

“By the black ship a ram and a black ewe
Had tethered, lightly passing by our crew.
For mortal eyes a God against his will
Hither or thither going may not view.

BOOK ELEVENTH

THE SUMMONING OF THE DEAD

“BUT to the ship and shore descending we
Drew the ship first into the shining sea,
And in the black ship put the mast and sails
And took the sheep aboard, and presently

“Ourselves we got aboard, discomfited ;
While from our eyes the heavy tears we shed.
But Circe then, the fair-tressed terrible
Goddess of mortal voice, our sails to spread,

“Behind the blue-prowed ship sent forth anon
A following wind, a good companion :
And, setting all in order on the ship,
We sat, while wind and helmsman drove her on.

“Thus all the day long hasted she to go
With drawing sails, until the sun was low
And all the ways were shadowed, and we reached
The borders of deep-eddying Ocean's flow.

THE ODYSSEY

“ Thereby a tribe of men their city keep,
Cimmerians, round whom mist and cloud are deep,
Nor ever does the shining sun on them
Dart down his rays when up the skyey steep

“ Star-strewn he climbs, nor when he turns once more
To earth descending from the heavenly floor ;
But baleful night upon those wretched men
Lies brooding : there we ran the ship ashore ;

“ And took the sheep from out her ; and beside
The current of the streaming Ocean tide
We went afoot until we reached the place
That Circe for our goal had signified.

“ There Perimedes made the sheep to stay,
He and Eurylochus, that we should slay ;
Meanwhile, the sharp sword drawing from my thigh,
I measured out a cubit either way,

“ And dug a pit, and on the carthen floor
Poured out drink-offering all the dead before,
With milk and honey first, and with sweet wine
Thereafter, and with water yet once more,

“ And on it strewed white barley-flour withal ;
And then in suppliant wise began to call
The strengthless people of the dead, with vows
To slay a barren heifer in my hall,

BOOK ELEVENTH

“ My best, when I to Ithaca should go ;
And precious things upon the fire to throw,
And a black sheep, the goodliest of the flock,
Apart upon Tiresias to bestow.

“ But when the lordly nations of the dead
With vows and prayers I had propitiated,
Taking the sheep, their throats above the pit
I cut, and into it their dark blood shed.

“ Then swarmed from out the darkness where they lay
Ghosts of the dead that had fulfilled their day :
Striplings and brides and aged men outworn ;
And tender maids whose grief was young as they ;

“ And many smitten with the bronze-topped spear
Famed warriors, who still wore their bloodstained gear,
With awful clamour all about the pit
Circling in swarms, that I waxed wan for fear.

“ Then straitly bade I them who stood around
The sheep that lay sword-slaughtered on the ground
To flay, and burn them, calling on the Gods,
Strong Hades and Persephone renowned.

“ But I, the sharp sword drawing from my thigh,
Sat still, and let not to the blood thereby
The strengthless people of the dead approach,
Ere of Tiresias I might win reply.

THE ODYSSEY

“Then came Elpenor’s ghost the first of all,
Our comrade, who not yet had burial
Under the wide-wayed earth : for we had left
Unburied and unwept in Circe’s hall

“His body, since another labour pressed :
And him I wept to see, and thus addressed,
And spake to him in winged words of ruth :
Elpenor, how beneath the misty West

“Came you to this dark land across the sea ?
For quicker you have come afoot than we
With our black ship might compass. Thus I said :
And he replied and sighing spake to me :

“High-born Odysseus of the subtle soul,
Son of Laertes, this thing wrought my dole,
Ill fate heaven-destined and excess of wine :
In Circe’s house I lay in sleep’s control,

“And waking, quite forgot aback to go
By the long ladder to the ground, and so
Fell headlong from the roof and brake my neck,
And my soul fled to the Dark House below.

“I pray you now by those whom you desire
In absence, by your wife and by the sire
That reared your childhood, and Telemachus,
The only child you left beside your fire :

BOOK ELEVENTH

“For passing hence from the Dark House I know
Back to the isle Aeaeon you shall go
On your well-fashioned ship : remember me,
Prince, I beseech you, there, nor leave me so,

“Unwept, unburied, when your way you take,
Lest the Gods hold you guilty for my sake :
But burn me with the armour that I wore,
And heap my grave-mound where the grey waves break;

“A sign for generations yet to be
Of my unhappy fate : do this for me,
And plant on it the oar I rowed with once,
While yet I lived, among your company.

“So said he : and I made reply thereto :
This, O ill-starred, will I perform and do.
Thus we in interchange of dolorous words
Sat there, with the pit’s mouth between us two :

“The phantom of my fellow many a word
Uttering, while I apart held out my sword
Over the blood. And my dead mother’s ghost
Came, Anticleia, daughter of the lord

“Autolycus high-hearted, whom of old
Alive I left when to the hallowed hold
Of Troy I went : and seeing her I grieved
For ruth, and from my eyes the teardrops rolled ;

THE ODYSSEY

“ Yet with the blood her thirst I would not slake
Ere of Tiresias I might question make.
Then came Tiresias the Theban’s ghost,
Gold rod in hand, and knew me there and spake :

“ O high-born subtle-souled Laertes’ son,
Odysseus, wherefore now, ill-fated one,
Leaving the sunlight are you come to see
The dead within the place where joy is none ?

“ Now from the pit’s mouth hold aloof, I pray,
And draw your sharp sword backward, that I may
Drink of the blood and utter soothsaying.
So said he to me, and I drew away ;

“ And in the sheath the silver-studded sword
Laid back ; and down to the black blood outpoured
The faultless prophet, stooping, drank of it,
And spake to me and uttered forth his word :

“ On your home honey-sweet your heart is set,
Glorious Odysseus : but great travail yet
Shall God ere that ordain you ; for I deem
The Shaker of the Earth will scarce forget

“ The wrath he nurses and the deep despite,
Because his son you blinded of his sight.
Yet even so you haply home may win,
You and your fellows, though in evil plight,

BOOK ELEVENTH

“ If your own soul and theirs you will refrain
From trespass, when you first the isle attain,
Thrinacia, in your goodly-fashioned ship
Escaping from the violet-coloured main ;

“ And find thereon at pasture where they run
The mighty sheep and oxen of the Sun,
Whose eyes and ears are on all things : for these
If you leave scathless without injury done,

“ Regarding your return, then yet may you
Reach Ithaca through perils not a few :
But if you harm them, then I prophesy
Destruction to your ship and all your crew.

“ And though yourself may to your land and kin
Escape, yet late and wretched shall you win
Your country, losing all your company,
On a strange ship, and find ill hap therein :

“ Insolent men, your substance who devour,
Wooing your godlike wife, and for her dower
Offering great gifts: yet vengeance you shall take
For all their wrong at your returning hour.

“ But when the suitors in your halls by sleight
Or with the sharp sword's edge in open fight
Are slain, then taking up your shapely oar
Fare forth again until on men you light

THE ODYSSEY

“ Who the sea know not, nor have ever stirred
Salt in their victual, nor of ships have heard
With prows vermilion-stained, or shapely oars
That are to ships as wings are to a bird.

“ And a plain sign I give you that you can
Lightly remember : when another man
Meeting you on the road shall say that you
On your stout shoulder bear a winnowing-fan,

“ Then at that sign fix deep your shapely oar
In earth, and goodly offerings lay before
Poseidon the Protector for his grace,
A ram, a bull, and a swine-covering boar.

“ Thereafter, having homeward turned your face,
With hallowed sacrifices plead for grace
To all the deathless Gods in order due
Who in wide heaven have their dwelling-place.

“ But for yourself far from the sea away
Shall death come very gently, and shall slay
In green old age outworn, and round your throne
A prosperous people. This for sooth I say.

“ So spake he, but I answering thus begun :
Surely the Gods' own hands this thread have spun :
But tell me now the truth, Tiresias ;
My mother's ghost I see, whose life is done,

BOOK ELEVENTH

“Nigh to the blood here sitting silently,
Nor on her own son face to face may she
Look, nor her lips accost him. Say, O prince,
How shall she know that I indeed am he ?

“So said I, and he straightway made reply :
Easy the word is in your heart that I
Will lay for guiding. Whomsoever you
Shall suffer to the blood to draw anigh,

“Of all the dead and them whose life is lost,
Truth shall he tell you to the uttermost ;
But he from whom you keep it shall return.
So saying, back to the Dark House the ghost

“Of prince Tiresias retreating sank,
His soothsay uttered : but upon the bank
Abode I still, until my mother next
Came nigh the pit and of the dark blood drank.

“Straightway she knew me then, and grieving sore
A winged word she spake : O child I bore,
How came you hither to the misty West
Alive ? for living men this dusky shore

“Hardly may see, which mighty floods enclose
And awful rivers, and before it flows
The Ocean-stream, that none afoot may cross,
Except in a well-built ship he goes.

THE ODYSSEY

“Is it but now that while long time you roam
Hither from Troy with ship and crew you come?
And have you won not yet to Ithaca
Nor seen your wife who waits for you at home?”

“So spake she, but I answering said: Alas,
My mother, strong constraint has made me pass
Down into darkness, to the ghost to seek
That was the Theban seer Tiresias.

“Not yet have I come nigh Achaean land,
Nor set my foot upon my native strand,
But ever have been wandering wearily
Since with bright Agamemnon hand in hand

“To Ilium nurse of steeds I took my way,
Against the Trojans battle to array;
Now tell me this thing plainly: by what fate
Did Death the Leveller bring you to decay?”

“Did a long sickness waste from you the bliss
Of life, or arrow-showering Artemis
With shafts that hurt not strike you down and slay?
And of my father likewise tell me this;

“And of the son I left behind me then:
Do they yet keep my honour among men?
Or has it fallen into strangers' hands
Who say that I return not home again?”

BOOK ELEVENTH

“ So said I : and the Queen returned reply,
My mother : Sure within your palace high
Abides she steadfast-hearted, and the days
And nights wears through with many a tear and sigh.

“ Nor does a stranger hold your honour fair ;
But still Telemachus untroubled there
Keeps the domain that is his heritage,
And in the banquets has an equal share

“ That for the lawgiver are duly spread ;
For all men bid him. But in lonelihead
Your father keeps his farm, nor to the town
Goes in at all, nor covered is his bed

“ With rugs and broidered blankets ; by the fire
Where they that in the household serve for hire
Among the ashes lie, in wintertide
He sleeps, his body clad in mean attire ;

“ But when the summer comes and fruits abound
In autumn, then his lowly bed is found
Where all about his terraced vineyard-plot
The fallen leaves lie thick upon the ground.

“ There lies he mourning, and his heart is sore,
Day after day, that you return no more,
While grievous eld comes over him : for thus
I likewise perished and my life outwore.

THE ODYSSEY

“For neither me where in my halls I lay
Did the keen-sighted Arrow-Showerer slay
With shafts that pain not, nor was I assailed
By any sickness, such as takes away

“The life out of the limbs with wasting sad ;
But died of longing that for you I had,
And for your wisdom and kind-heartedness,
Noble Odysseus, that my life made glad.

“So said she : but I inly for a space
Mused and was full of longing to embrace
The soul of my dead mother. Thrice I sprang
Toward her, fain to clasp her face to face ;

“And thrice from out my hands to clasp her spread
Like to a shadow or a dream she fled.
And grief waxed ever keener at my heart,
And winged words I spake to her and said :

“My mother, wherefore draw you thus aside
From me and will not my embrace abide
That we in this dark realm may cast our hands
Each round the other, and be satisfied

“With frozen wailing? or should this have been
A phantom only that the awful Queen
Persephone has sent me, to the end
My grief and sorrow may be yet more keen ?

BOOK ELEVENTH

“So spake I ; and the Queen my mother so
Made answer : O my child, foredoomed to woe
Beyond all mortal men ! Persephone
God’s daughter mocks you with no lying show :

“But in this wise it is when men are dead :
From flesh and bones the strength is minished ;
But these the strong might of the burning fire
Consumes, when once the spirit forth is fled

“From the white bones ; and like a dream by night
Hovers the fleeting soul. Now toward the light
Make haste, and all these things, that afterward
You to your wife may tell them, mark aright.

“Thus while we spake together, I and she,
At summons of august Persephone
The women who had been on earth of old
Daughters and wives of princes came to me.

“Round the black blood in swarming crowds they came :
But I considered how of each her name
I might inquire ; and to my pondering mind
Seemed this device the best that I might frame.

“Drawing the straight-edged sword from off my thigh,
I let not all to drink the blood draw nigh
At once, but filing singly, each her birth
They told, and to my asking made reply.

THE ODYSSEY

“Then first of all befell mine eyes to see
Tyro, the maid of noble ancestry ;
Who for her father named the blameless prince
Salmoneus, and to Cretheus wife was she,

“The Aeolid : and for the love she bare
The River-God Enipeus, who most fair
Is of all rivers that spring forth on earth,
Would to Enipeus’ lovely streams repair.

“Then in his form and feature on the strand
The Lord who girdles round and shakes the land
Lay with her by the swirling flood’s outflow ;
And the dark wave upreared on either hand

“Stood round them hollowed like a mountain steep,
The mortal woman and the God to keep
Hid ; and the girdle of her maidenhood
He loosed, and shed her on the cloud of sleep.

“But when the God his amorous work had done,
He clasped her hand and spake and thus begun :
Be glad, O wedded woman, in our love,
And when the circle of the year is run,

“Fair children you shall bear : for nowise she
With whom a God has lain shall barren be :
Nurse them and give them rearing ; but to-day
Go home and hold your peace, and name not me ;

BOOK ELEVENTH

“ But know that I who by your side have lain
Poseidon am, the Shaker of the Main.
So saying, he plunged beneath the billowing sea ;
But she conceived, and bare him children twain,

“ Pelias and Neleus, of whom either was
A servant strong of Zeus : and Pelias
Dwelt in Iolcus, where on the wide leas
He kept innumerable sheep at grass ;

“ And Neleus dwelt at Pylos in the sand :
But then, to Cretheus having given her hand,
Aeson, and Amythaon lord of steeds,
And Pheres, bare that lady of the land.

“ And after her I saw Antiope
The daughter of Asopus ; also she
Avouched that she in the embrace of Zeus
Slept, and to him, a twofold progeny,

“ Amphion bare and Zethus, who of old
Stablished with towers and gateways sevenfold
The seat of Thebes ; for mighty as they were
The spacious town unfenced they could not hold.

“ And after her passed by mine eyes before
Amphitryon's wife, Alcmena, who of yore
Was mingled in the arms of mighty Zeus ;
And valiant Heracles to him she bore,

THE ODYSSEY

“The lion-hearted. Likewise I espied
That daughter of King Creon full of pride,
Megara, whom Amphytryon’s mighty son
Tireless in battle took to him for bride.

“And then beheld I Epicasta fair,
Oedipus’ mother, her who unaware
Did a strange deed through ignorance of mind,
To intermarry with the son she bare.

“And he his mother wedded, having slain
His father : and these things the Gods made plain
To all men suddenly ; then he among
The folk Cadmean held a troublous reign,

“In lovely Thebes, according to the fate
By purpose of the Gods predestinate
For evil : but she went her way alone
To the strong Warder of the darkling gate ;

“From the high roof knotting the fatal string,
Because her sorrow knew no comforting,
And left to him unnumbered miseries,
Such as the Curses of a mother bring.

“And Chloris I beheld most beauteous,
Who to Amphion son of Iasus
Was youngest daughter (a great king was he
Among the Minyae in Orchomenus)

BOOK ELEVENTH

“ Whom Neleus, for that she was very fair,
Bought with great gifts and wedded ; wherefore there
In Pylos she was queen, and afterward
Nestor and Chromius, comely children, bare,

“ And lordly Periclymenus to him,
And after them a maiden strong of limb,
Pero, the marvel of mankind, for whom
Made suit all dwellers round that kingdom's rim.

“ Howbeit the king would promise her to none
Save him who should from Phylace have won
The oxen of the might of Iphiclus
Horned and wide-browed, a deed not lightly done.

“ Yet them the faultless prophet unafraid
Promised to drive away with no man's aid :
But the hard fate of God entangled him,
Into harsh fetters by rude herdsmen laid.

“ And there he lay long time in evil cheer,
Until when now the months and days drew near
To the completion of their circling course,
And when the revolution of the year

“ Brought back the seasons in returning round,
The might of Iphiclus his chains unbound,
After he uttered all his oracles :
So that the will of God fulfilment found.

THE ODYSSEY

“Leda the spouse of Tyndareus the king
Likewise I saw, who bare to him offspring
Valiant and famous, Castor among steeds,
And Polydeuces in the boxing-ring :

“Whom Earth the Life-giver holds, dying not ;
For under ground by grace of Zeus the lot
Is theirs upon alternate days to live
And die, and honour they as Gods have got.

“And after her befell me to behold
Iphimedeia, Aloeus’ wife, who told
How she, being mingled with Poseidon, bare
Two godlike sons, who lived not to be old ;

“Otus and Ephialtes far-renowned,
That were of all whom the corn-bearing ground
Has nurtured, save Orion famed alone,
The tallest and by far the goodliest found.

“At nine years old nine cubits broad were they,
Nine fathoms high, and threatened to array
Against high heaven itself loud-sounding war,
And rear their storming-works, till Ossa lay

“Piled on Olympus, and on Ossa stood
Pelion with all his tossing crest of wood,
To make heaven scaleable ; and had they reached
Their manhood’s prime, that threat they had made good :

BOOK ELEVENTH

“ But fair-tressed Leto’s child destroyed them both,
The son of Zeus, ere yet the beard might clothe
Their cheeks below the temples, or the down
Thicken to blossom of a goodlier growth.

“ And Phaedra I beheld and Procris there
Before me pass, and Ariadne fair,
Minos the wizard’s daughter, whom from Crete
To the high place of Athens Theseus bare,

“ But joyed not of her, for in Dia she
By Artemis was slain amid the sea,
Through witness Dionysius bore of her.
And Maera I beheld, and Clymene,

“ And Eriphyle the accurst, who sold
Her wedded husband for a price of gold.
Yea, for the name and tale of all I saw,
Daughters and wives of mighty men of old,

“ The hours of deathless night were all too few :
But now is time to sleep, amid my crew
On the swift ship, or even where I am,
Leaving my convoy to the Gods and you.”

So spake he : and in silence all who heard
Sat dumb along the shadowy halls nor stirred,
Held in enchantment : till at last began
White-armed Arete and spake forth a word :

THE ODYSSEY

“Phaeacians, how is this man in your eyes
For comeliness and stature and for wise
Spirit within him? and my guest he is,
But with you all to honour him it lies.

“Then send him not away in haste, nor scant
Your gifts to fill the measure of his want;
For many treasures in your houses lie
Through favour that the Gods are pleased to grant.”‘‘‘‘

Outspake the old lord Echeneüs then,
Who was most aged of Phaeacian men:
“O friends, not vainly nor beside the mark
The Queen out of her wisdom speaks again.

“Therefore obey her: yet the King shall shew
Whether this word into a deed shall grow.”
Thereat Alcinous answered him and spake:
“Truly this word shall find fulfilment so;

“Sure as I live and reign upon the shore
Of the Phaeacian masters of the oar.
But let our guest have patience to abide
Until to-morrow, though he long right sore

“For his return, that I in full may pay
His guerdon: then to speed him on his way
Shall be a charge for all of us, but most
For me, who hold this people in my sway.”

BOOK ELEVENTH

But subtle-souled Odysseus answering spoke :
“ O prince Alcinous, lordliest of the folk,
If a whole year you bade me yet abide,
Nor sped my convoy when the morning broke,

“ Rich gifts to give me, I were well content ;
For then the fuller-handed were I sent,
And were in all men’s eyes more worshipful
And dear, when home to Ithaca I went.”

Then spake Alcinous answering and said :
“ Truly we deem you not by likelihead,
Looking on you, Odysseus, one of those
Who on the black earth here and there are bred,

“ Knaves and dissemblers, men who fashion lies
Of things that are beyond their hearer’s eyes ;
But grace of words is yours and steadfast sense,
And as a skilful minstrel might devise,

“ So have you told the tale of heavy care
That you and all your Argive fellows bare ;
Now say this further and make plain the tale,
If any of the godlike comrades there

“ You saw again, who with you to Troy town
Together sailed, and there to death went down ;
For long beyond all measure is the night,
Nor yet is it the hour with sleep to crown

THE ODYSSEY

“Day’s labour ; therefore deeds of high emprise
Tell on ; for until shining Dawn arise
Fain would I wake, so long as here in hall
You would recount me all your miseries.”

And subtle-souled Odysseus answering spoke :
“O prince Alcinous, lordliest of the folk,
A time there is for slumber, and a time
For long discourse ; but if my tale have woke

“Desire in you to hear yet more to-night,
I will not grudge to tell you of the plight
More piteous yet of them that afterward
Died, and escaped the dismal clang of fight

“In Troy, but perished on their homeward way,
Brought by an evil woman to decay.
For when august Persephone the ghosts
Of wives and women drove in disarray,

“The ghost of Agamemnon Atreus’ son
Came sorrowing, and about him every one
Gathered their ghosts who in Aegisthus’ house
Died at his side and were by fate undone.

“Now after he had drunk of the dark blood
Straightway he knew me, and let fall a flood
Of tears, and shrilly weeping, stretched his hands
Toward me, fain to clasp me where I stood.

BOOK ELEVENTH

“ But out of his lithe limbs was perished then
Their force and strength. And seeing him again
I wept for ruth, and spake a winged word
And said : O Agamemnon, king of men,

“ By what doom, Atreus’ son most glorious,
Did Death the Leveller abase you thus ?
Say, did Poseidon slay you on the ships,
Rousing thwart blasts of winds tempestuous ?

“ Or on dry land did men in war-array
Deal you your death-wound, while you drove away
Their herds and goodly-fleeced flocks, or fought
To take their town and women for your prey ?

“ Thus I : and straightway he made answer so :
Son of Laertes many-counselled, no,
High-born Odysseus, neither on the ships,
Rousing thwart winds tempestuous to blow,

“ Poseidon reft my life from me that day,
Nor on dry land did men in war-array
Deal me my death-wound ; but Aegisthus then
It was who wrought my death and my decay,

“ By treachery, and my cursed wife withal,
Bidding me home to banquet in his hall ;
And thus by a most piteous death I died,
Even as an ox is slaughtered in the stall.

THE ODYSSEY

“ And round me were my fellows slain outright
Without surcease, like swine with tushes white
Where in some great and wealthy man’s abode
Bridal or feast or banquet rich is dight.

“ Oft have you been ere now where blood was shed
Of men in single combat fallen dead
Or in the mellay grim : but more than all
Compassion in your spirit had been bred

“ To see, where in the midst the wine-bowl stood
Filled, and the tables were heaped high with food,
How slaughtered in the banquet-hall we lay,
And all the floor beneath us reeked with blood.

“ And then most piteous all the rest among
Cassandra’s death-shriek in my hearing rung,
Whom Clytemnestra of the traitorous heart
Slew, as about me Priam’s daughter clung.

“ But I flung up my hands without a word
And on the ground fell clutching at the sword
In death ; while she, the shameless, turned away
As to the House of Darkness passed her lord :

“ And deigned not even this, in pitying wise
To close my mouth and cover up mine eyes :
Cruel and shameless is beyond all else
A woman’s heart that can such deeds devise ;

BOOK ELEVENTH

“As she devised to do this monstrous thing,
On her own wedded lord his death to bring
By violence : yea, I said right joyfully
Children and thralls would greet my home-coming :

“But she, with mischievous devices fraught
Past measure, shame upon herself has brought
And the whole sex of women after her,
Even on such as naught but good have wrought.

“So spake he ; but I answered : Woe is me !
From the beginning sure exceedingly
Zeus the Far-Sounder enmity has shown
To Atreus’ seed through women’s treachery.

“Seeing that for Helen’s sake our blood we shed
Full oft : and now for you the snare was spread
By Clytemnestra, being far away.
So spake I : and he answered me and said :

“Therefore, you likewise, be not over-kind
To your own wife, the counsel of your mind
To tell her wholly : part thereof alone
Utter to her, and part keep hid behind.

“Yet not for you at your wife’s hand shall be
Such death, Odysseus ; otherwise is she
And understands good counsel in her heart,
Icarius’ daughter, sage Penelope,

THE ODYSSEY

“ Whom we before her bridal-year was run,
Left when we went on warfare, and her son
An infant at the breast, who now belike
Sits among men and is accounted one.

“ Happy ! for him his father face to face
Shall see, returning home, and he embrace
His father, as is comely : but my wife
Suffered me not to glad mine eyes a space

“ With sight of mine own child, but me she slew
Ere I might see him. Now consider you
This other word I say : not openly
On your own country land with ship and crew,

“ But secretly, since henceforth no man may
Put trust in women. Now I pray you, say
And tell me truly, if of any land
You hear wherein my child yet lives to-day :

“ Orchomenus, or Pylos deep in sand,
Or the realm held in Menelaus' hand,
Wide-stretching Sparta : for I deem not yet
Has bright Orestes perished from the land.

“ So spake he, but I answered him again :
O son of Atreus, wherefore are you fain
To ask ? Naught know I of him live or dead,
And ill it is to speak where words are vain.

BOOK ELEVENTH

“ Thus as exchanging words of evil cheer
Doleful we stood and shed the heavy tear,
The spirit of Achilles, Peleus’ son,
Came with Patroclus, and with them drew near

“ Antilochus the blameless, and the ghost
Of Aias, who in frame and feature most
Next Peleus’ son, the prince Aeacides,
Was excellent amid the Danaan host.

“ Straightway the spirit of the Fleet-foot One
Knew me, and thus with winged words begun
In lamentable wise : O subtle-souled
High-born Odysseus, O Laertes’ son,

“ What harder deed than this will you essay,
Rash man ? how durst you take the downward way
To the Dark House where dwell the senseless dead,
Phantoms of men that have wrought out their day ?

“ So said he ; but I spake and answered thus :
Achilles, Peleus’ son, most glorious
By far of all the Achaeans, on a quest
Now I come hither, being solicitous

“ Of counsel at the seer Tiresias’ hand,
How I may win to Ithaca’s rough strand.
For not yet have I touched Achaean soil
Nor set my foot upon my native land ;

THE ODYSSEY

“ But ever wander by misfortune driven :
But you of all men are most blest of Heaven
Past or to come, who from the Achaean host
Had honour such as to the gods is given

“ In the old days, and now amongst the dead
Still hold dominion : then be comforted
Though you have died, Achilles. Thus I spake ;
But straightway he returned reply and said :

“ Speak not soft words concerning death to me
Glorious Odysseus : rather had I be
A thrall upon the acres to a man
Portionless and sunk low in poverty,

“ Than over all the perished dead below
Hold lordship. But now tell me ere you go
Of the high prince my son, if to the war
As battle-leader he went forth or no.

“ And tell me if your ears have tidings met
Concerning faultless Peleus : keeps he yet
Honour among the many Myrmidons ?
Or do men hold him lightly, and forget

“ His fame in Hellas and the Phthian land,
Now when old age has bound him foot and hand ?
Would that I might but once again arise
Beneath the sunlight by his side to stand,

BOOK ELEVENTH

“ And be his helper, in the might that then
Was mine when in wide Troy the flower of men
I slew, defending all the Argive host :
If in the glory of those days again

“ Returning, nigh my father’s house I drew
But for a little, some of these would rue
My might and my unconquerable hands,
Who vex him and withhold his honour due.

“ So said he ; but I spoke and made reply :
Of faultless Peleus no report have I ;
But of your own son Neoptolemus
The word you bid me utter shall not lie.

“ For I it was who brought him over sea
From Scyros in my good ship’s hull, where we
The mailed Achaeans lay before Troy town ;
And when we held debate of policy,

“ Ever he spoke the first, nor spoke in vain,
And none excelled him in debate but twain,
Myself and godlike Nestor : but when spear
Met spear in battle on the Trojan plain,

“ Not in the throng where man stood close to man
Would he abide, but far in front outran,
Yielding to none in might, and many fell
Before him, when the deadly strife began.

THE ODYSSEY

“ Nay, all I cannot tell or name aright
Whom for the Argive cause he slew in fight :
Among whom was the prince Eurypylus
The Telephid, that fell before his might .

“ With his Ceteans fallen round him dead
Because of gifts a woman coveted :
Of all men whom mine eyes have looked on he
Next to bright Memnon was the goodliest head.

“ But when into the horse’s framework went
We Argive princes, that with skilled intent
Epeüs wrought, (and all the charge was mine
To open and to shut our ambushment,)

“ Then all the other Danaans saving him
Wiped tears away and quaked in every limb,
Both councillor and captain ; but mine eyes
Saw not the brightness of his face grow dim ;

“ Not ever wiped he from his cheek the tear,
But pleaded with me oft to let him clear
The barrier, while with restless hands he clutched
The sword-hilt and the heavy bronze-topped spear.

“ So wroth against the men of Troy was he :
But when King Priam’s high town utterly
We sacked and wasted, with a goodly share
Of prize and plunder he put forth to sea,

BOOK ELEVENTH

“ Scathless, not hurt by flying points that strike
From far, nor wounded at the push of pike,
As is the chance of warfare, when the rage
Of Ares levels friend and foe alike.

“ So said I ; and thereat went pleased well,
Huge-striding down the mead of asphodel,
The spirit of the fleet-foot Aeacid,
When of his son’s renown he heard me tell.

“ Now all the ghosts of warriors dead and gone
Stood round me in great dole, and every one
Asked tidings of their kindred : but the ghost
Of Telamonian Aias all alone

“ Stood back aloof : for wroth at heart was he
Against me for that luckless victory
I won of him, when we beside the ships
Contended whose Achilles’ arms should be.

“ Them the Queen-mother set before our eyes ;
And with the sons of Troy adjudged the prize
Pallas Athena : would they were not mine !
Since for their sake the head of Aias lies

“ Low under earth, who all those Danaan dead
Excelled in valiance and in goodlihead,
Excepting only Peleus’ faultless son.
And now to him soft words I spake and said :

THE ODYSSEY

“ O Aias, son of faultless Telamon,
Will you not, even now your life is done,
Forget the wrath against me that you bore
Because of those accursed arms I won ?

“ The Gods ordained them for the Argiye host
A mischief : such a tower in you was lost ;
Nor less than for the head of Peleus’ son,
Achilles’ self, when you gave up the ghost,

“ We the Achaeans grieved, and grieve to-day ;
Yet on none other is the blame to lay
But Zeus, who unextinguishable hate
Bore to the Danaan spearmen’s armed array,

“ And laid this fate upon you to fulfil.
Therefore, O prince, come hither, if you will,
To hearken to our word and our discourse ;
And let your rage and haughty heart be still.

“ So spake I ; but no word he deigned to say,
But with the other spirits passed away
After his comrades to the darkling land
Where dead men dwell who have fulfilled their day.

“ Then notwithstanding all his wrath had we
Yet spoken, I to him or he to me,
But in my breast the ghosts of other men
Dead and deceased my spirit longed to see.

BOOK ELEVENTH

“There Minos, the famed son of Zeus, I saw
Among the dead administering law,
Seated, his golden sceptre in his hand,
And round their judge the ghostly people draw

“Seated or standing, of their case to tell
In the wide-portalled judgment-hall of hell.
Also of huge Orion I took note,
Who drave along the mead of asphodel

“Huddled before him the wild beasts of chase
That on the hills in many a lonely place
On earth he slew ; and in his hand he grasped
The solid bronze imperishable mace.

“And I saw Tityos, whom the huge Earth bore,
Over nine roods lie spread along the floor,
While upon either side a vulture couched
Plunged in his bowels and his liver tore ;

“And he his hands to scare them could not loose ;
Because to Leto, the high spouse of Zeus,
He had done violence, when to Pytho she
Passed through the lovely lawns of Panopeus.

“And also Tantalus I saw therein,
Who in a mere stood sunken to the chin
With thirst tormented, but though straining sore,
To reach and drink thereof he might not win.

THE ODYSSEY

“ Because when he his ancient head was fain
To stoop to drink, the water fled amain
Upswallowed, and the black earth round his feet
Shewed, by a miracle dried up again.

“ Likewise high-foliaged trees from overhead
Upon that ancient man their fruitage shed
On drooping branches, pears and pomegranates
And sweet-juiced figs and olives burgeoned,

“ And apple-trees with shining apples hung ;
But whensoever he his hands outflung
To grasp at them, a sudden wind arose
And whirled them up the shadowy clouds among.

“ Sisyphus likewise I beheld : and he
Endured hard travail and great misery
While a prodigious stone in both his hands
Grasping he heaved up hill laboriously

“ With foot and hand, till when by many a throe
He brought it nigh across the ridge to go,
A force he might not master turning it,
Rolled backward plunging to the plain below

“ The stone that knew no mercy : then he must
Begin once more the stone up hill to thrust
With mighty strain, while off his limbs the sweat
Dripped, and around his head uprose the dust.

BOOK ELEVENTH

“ And next I saw and noted after these
The phantom of the might of Heracles :
But he himself among the deathless Gods
In banquet and rejoicing takes his ease,

“ Possessing Hebe of the ankles fair,
The daughter whom gold-sandalled Hera bare
To Zeus almighty. Round him all the dead
Flew scared and clamorous like birds in air ;

“ But he like black night, with his bow unslung
As one in act to shoot, and arrow strung,
Gazed fiercely out along it : round his breast
The golden belt, his awful baldric, hung :

“ Along which marvellously wrought outstood
Figures of bears and wild boars of the wood
And lions grim, and battlefields and broils
And murders and men weltering in their blood.

“ Naught craftier need the craftsman undertake,
Who in his art availed that belt to make.
And he too knew me, when his eyes on me
Fell, and in ruth a winged word he spake :

“ Alas, high-born Odysseus, subtle-souled,
Son of Laertes ! sure the lot you hold
Is fraught with such ill fortune as myself
I bore beneath the sunlight once of old.

THE ODYSSEY

“For though I was the son of Zeus, as he
Of Cronus, yet I bore great misery
Beyond all bound, to a far worsen man
Made subject, who set grievous tasks on me.

“Yea, hither sent he me to fetch the Hound,
Than which no mightier labour could be found
By his desire for my performing: him
I bore away and brought from underground,

“From Hades’ house, by Hermes on my way
Sped, and Athena with the eyes of grey.
So saying, back he went within the house
Of Hades. But I still abode at stay,

“If more might yet draw nigh of warriors good
Who died in former times; and whom I would
Then had I seen, Pirithoüs of old days
And Theseus, children of the Gods’ high blood:

“But now with awful clangour round me sped
The innumerable nations of the dead,
And pale I waxed for terror, lest to me
The awful horror of the Gorgon-head

“August Persephone might send anigh
From the Dark Mansion. Wherefore quickly I
Went to the ship, and bade my crew embark
And cast off moorings: and they presently

BOOK ELEVENTH

“Embarked, and sat upon the benches there ;
And her at first the brimming current bare,
Helped by our oarage, down the Ocean-stream ;
And afterward a following wind was fair.

BOOK TWELFTH

THE SIRENS; SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS;
THE OXEN OF THE SUN

“BUT when our ship, behind her leaving far
The Ocean-current and the river-bar,
Had reached the billow of the wide-wayed sea
And the isle Aeaeon, where the dwellings are

“Of Dawn of Morning and her dancing-floor,
And spaces of the sunrise, there once more
We ran our ship abeach upon the sand
And disembarked from out her on the shore,

“Where the surf broke, and thereby slumbering
We waited for the shining morn to spring.
And when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
I sent my crew to Circe’s house to bring

“The body thence, Elpenor that was dead ;
And quickly cutting billets where a head
Ran out to sea, we made his funeral
Lamenting, and the heavy tear we shed.

BOOK TWELFTH

“ But when the dead man with the arms he wore
Was burned, we heaped his grave-mound on the shore,
And reared a pillar over him, and fixed
Upon the topmost mound his shapely oar.

“ Thus all the rites we ordered as was due :
But Circe well of our returning knew
From the Dark House, and very speedily
Arrayed herself and down anigh us drew.

“ And by her side her serving-women came
Bearing much flesh and red wine bright as flame.
Then in our midst the bright of Goddesses
Stood by, and thus her speech began to frame :

“ O greatly daring, you who here arrive
From the Dark House ascending yet alive ;
Twice dying, where the lot of other men
Is to die once and then no more survive :

“ Come now, so long as here you make your stay,
Eat victual and drink wine throughout the day ;
And with the dawning of to-morrow's light
You shall sail onward and pursue your way.

“ But I will take your guidance now in hand,
Making each thing so plain to understand
That by no evil counsel brought to harm
You may have grief and bale by sea or land.

THE ODYSSEY

“So spake she ; and the heart of all my men
Took confidence : so all the day long then
We sat and feasted on abundant flesh
And sweet strong wine ; but when the sun again

“Had set, and darkness fell upon the day,
By the ship’s mooring-cables down they lay
To slumber : but apart from all my crew
She took me by the hand and led away,

“And there beside her made me take my seat
And straitly questioned, lying at my feet,
Of all my journeying ; and I the tale
Told her from first to last in order meet.

“Then spake in turn Circe the Queen and said :
Thus then are all these things accomplished ;
Now listen you and mark what I shall say ;
And God himself shall keep it in your head.

“First to the Sirens you shall come : and they
Enchant all mortal men who come their way.
For whosoever in his witlessness
Draws nigh and listens to the Sirens’ lay,

“About him, as he wins his native shore,
His wife and infant children come no more,
Rejoicing over him : but there he lies
Lulled by the sweet song that the Sirens pour,

BOOK TWELFTH

“ As in a mead they sit, where all around
Great heaps of bones lie mouldering on the ground,
And the flesh wastes from off them ; hasten by
And, lest these others' ears might hear the sound,

“ Knead honey-scented wax to stop them fast ;
Yet you yourself may listen, sailing past,
If you desire : but make them bind you down
In the swift ship with cables from the mast ;

“ That you, in the mast-socket lashed upright,
May hear the Sirens' singing with delight :
And if you pray them sore to let you go,
Let them but fasten up your bonds more tight.

“ Now when your crew have rowed you clean away
Past these, no more thereafter will I say
On which hand lies your passage, but yourself
Consider in your mind your course to lay.

“ And I will tell what lies on either hand.
For on the one side beetling rocks upstand
Sheer, and against them roaring breaks the wave
Of blue-eyed Amphitrite on the land.

“ The blissful Gods these the Rocks Wandering
Name in their speech ; and by them may not wing
Fowl of the air, not even the shy doves
That deathless meat to Zeus our Father bring.

THE ODYSSEY

“ But ever one of them the edge of stone
Cuts off, and ever he another one
Sends to make out their tale ; and ships of men
Drawn thither never through them safe have gone ;

“ But the salt sea-wave and the tempest-blast
Of scorching flame together weltering cast
Ships’ timbers and men’s corpses ; yea, of all
Seafaring ships but one that strait has passed :

“ Argo, when she mid all men’s hope and fear
Sailed from Aeetes ; nor had she passed clear
From the great rocks, but Hera sent her by,
Because Iason to her heart was dear.

“ But of two rocks the one you shall espy
Into wide heaven a sharp peak lifting high,
Swathed in dark mist that never breaks from it,
And never round its head is open sky

“ Through summer and through latter summer’s fall,
Nor may a mortal man that mountain-wall
Scale, or find foothold on it, though a score
Of hands and feet he had to climb withal.

“ For smooth the rock is, as if hewn away
All round, and there a cavern misty-grey
Yawns half way up the precipice, its mouth
Facing the dusky west and dying day.

BOOK TWELFTH

“ Below it steer your carven galley then ;
Though from a carven galley none of men,
Renowned Odysseus, can with all his might
Reach with an arrow-shot her hollow den.

“ And dreadful-yelping Scylla dwells therein,
Whose voice as a new-littered whelp’s is thin,
But she an evil monster, so that none
Even of Gods but dreads her sight to win.

“ Twelve feet she has all waving to and fro,
And six long necks that stretch out far below,
On each an awful head, and teeth in it
Full of black death, set close in triple row.

“ Deep in her hollow cavern underground
She lurks half hid, and from the chasm profound
Thrusts her heads forth and fishes from her den
Backward and forward the cliff-base around ;

“ Hunting for sharks and dolphins for her food,
Or some sea-creature of the monstrous brood
That hollow-roaring Amphitrite feeds
Under the wave in countless multitude.

“ And never yet might mariners who sought
That passage vaunt that past her they have brought
Their ship, nor paid the toll : for by each head
Out of the blue-prowed ship a man is caught.

THE ODYSSEY

“ But on the other side you will espy
A lower rock, Odysseus : one is nigh
The other, but an arrow-shot apart :
And on it a wild fig tree great and high,

“ That burgeons forth in many a leafy spray,
Under whose boughs Charybdis bright alway
Sucks the dark water in and flings it up :
Thrice she spouts out the water every day,

“ And thrice engulfs it with a dreadful din ;
Keep off her when she sucks the water in :
For not the Shaker of the Earth himself
Might from destruction your deliverance win.

“ But closely by the rock of Scylla coast
Keeping well in, and row your uttermost ;
Since better far it is that in your ship
Six should be missing than the whole be lost.

“ So spake she : but I answered her straightway :
I pray you, Goddess, tell me how I may
Escape from fell Charybdis, yet withal
Ward off that other ere my men she slay.

“ Thereto the Goddess bright made swift reply :
Insatiate, is your courage yet so high
For toil and feats of war, that you will yield
Not even to the Gods who do not die ?

BOOK TWELFTH

“No mortal thing is she of whom I tell,
But an immortal mischief, fierce and fell,
Dread, unassailable, against whom force
Avails not ; only flight from her is well.

“For if you linger nigh her rocky den
Arming yourself, by likelihood again
Will she as many heads dart out on you,
And pluck from out your ship as many men.

“Nay, but most vehemently ply the oar,
And on the mighty mother call who bore
Scylla, that bane of mortals ; then may she
Keep her from darting out on you once more.

“Thence to the isle Thrinacia through the deep
Next shall you come, whereon their pasture keep
The Sun’s strong sheep and oxen, seven herds
Of oxen, seven flocks of fair-fleeced sheep.

“In each one half a hundred head are they,
And bear no offspring neither know decay ;
And fair-tressed Goddesses, Lampetie
And Phaëthusa, are their guard alway :

“The nymphs whom bright Neaera time ago
Bare to the Sun their sire, Hyperion.
For these their mother having borne and nursed
Sent them to dwell Thrinacia’s isle upon ;

THE ODYSSEY

“That there afar abiding they might keep
Their father’s horned herds and flocks of sheep :
These if you leave unharmed, and set your mind
On your return though perils of the deep,

“Yet may you reach your country and your kin ;
But if you harm them, I foretell herein
Destruction to your ship and all your crew :
And though yourself to Ithaca may win,

“Late and unhappy shall your coming be,
And all your crew shall perish. So said she ;
And straightway Dawn upon her throne of gold
Ascended : up the island presently

“The bright of Goddesses departed then ;
But passing to the ship I bade my men
Embark and cast off moorings ; and in haste
They got them in and took their seats again,

“And sitting at the benches in array
Smote with their oars upon the water grey ;
Until the fair-tressed Goddess terrible,
Circe of mortal voice, to speed our way

“Behind the blue-prowed ship sent forth anon
A following wind, a good companion.
Then, setting all in order on the ship,
We sat while wind and helmsman drove her on.

BOOK TWELFTH

“Then to my crew I spake sad-hearted thus :
O friends, not one or two alone of us
But all behoves to know the words divine
That Circe spake, the Goddess glorious ;

“Therefore her counsel now recount will I,
That ignorant at least we may not die,
Or even may escape the death and doom
That threatens. First she bade us, passing by

“The Sirens sitting on their flowery plain,
To lend no ear to their enchanting strain ;
Me only she allows to hear their voice,
If you will bind me in a grievous chain,

“Lashed upright in the socket of the mast
Immoveable, a cable round me cast :
And if I pray you sore to let me go,
In straiter bonds than ever tie me fast.

“Thus word by word discoursed I to my crew ;
And all the while the ship well-built drew
Anigh the island where the Sirens are ;
For swift before the steady wind it flew.

“Then the breeze dropped at once, and windless lay
A calm about us, and the waves at play
God lulled to rest ; and rising up, my crew
Furled the ship's sails and laid them all away

THE ODYSSEY

“ In the ship’s hold, and sitting down by me
With their smooth pinewood oars made white the sea;
While I cut up a great round cake of wax
And in my fingers wrought it busily.

“ And soon the wax began to melt and run
Under the strong persuasion of the Sun,
The prince Hyperion ; so passing round
With it I stopped the ears of every one.

“ Then foot and hand with cables from the mast
Standing upright aboard they bound me fast
In the mast-socket, and themselves sat down
And the grey water with the oars upcast.

“ Now when at hailing distance we came by
Skimming the sea, they failed not to espy
The swift sea-travelling ship as near it drew ;
And with a shrill sweet voice began to cry :

“ Come hither, come, Odysseus far-renowned,
High fame of the Achaeans, lay aground
Your ship that you may listen to our voice :
For never yet has mariner been found

“ That past our shore in his black ship would go,
Nor hear the sweet songs from our lips that flow
And hence a gladder and a wiser man
Pass on his voyage : for the tale we know

BOOK TWELFTH

“Of all the Argive and the Trojan toil
When in wide Troy the Gods’ will bred them broil,
And whatsoever things have come to pass
We know, upon the earth’s all-nurturing soil.

“So sang they sweetly ; and with yearning strong
I fain had listened to their lovely song,
And with bent brows I beckoned to my men
To set me free : but they rowed hard along.

“And Perimedes rising from his oar
Came with Eurylochus, and bonds yet more
Drew round me and yet harder tied me down,
Until they had rowed past that magic shore.

“And when the Sirens’ voice and melody
Passed out of hearing, they immediately
The wax that I had stopped their ears withal
Took out, and from my bonds unfastened me.

“But when we left the island, I could hear
A roaring great, and straightway saw appear
Smoke and a raging surf ; and from their hands
The oars of all the rowers fell in fear,

“And splashed into the current : and anon,
When the long oarblades ceased to drive her on,
The ship stood still. But passing through the ship
One after one my fellows woe-begone

THE ODYSSEY

“I cheered with words of comfort : O my men,
Not ignorant of peril once again
We meet it : nor more grievous case is this
Than when the Cyclops in his hollow den

“By brute force held us prisoned : yet from it
My valour and my counsel and my wit
Wrought our escape ; and this day haply too
Shall we remember when at home we sit.

“Then as I bid you do obediently :
Sit to the thwarts and the deep-surging sea
Smite with your oars, if Zeus may grant to us
From this doom likewise to escape and flee.

“But you, O helmsman, thus in special wise
I charge, and in your heart with heed devise
To do my bidding, since within your hands
The steering of our carven galley lies :

“Hold the ship out beyond that surf and spray,
And by the cliff take heed her course to lay,
Lest suddenly for lack of vigilance
Thither she swerve and we be cast away.

“So spake I, and my words their hearts controlled ;
Howbeit of Scylla not a word I told,
That cureless mischief, lest through fear my crew
Might cease to row and huddle in the hold.

BOOK TWELFTH

“ And then to Circe’s words I gave not ear,
Nor to her ordinance full harsh to hear
Forbidding me to arm myself for fight ;
But I did on my shining battle-gear,

“ And holding two long spearshafts in my hand
Upon the forward deck I took my stand,
Whence first I deemed would Scylla of the Rock
Appear to carry havoc on our band.

“ But nowhere I descried her, not although
My eyes were tired with gazing high and low
Along the mist-clad curtain of the rock :
Thus on we sailed with hearts foreboding woe.

“ On one side Scylla edged the narrow space ;
On the other bright Charybdis full in face
The salt sea-water in her whirlpool spun :
When out she vomited it, all the place

“ Boiled up and bubbled, like a caldron hung
On a strong fire, and high the spray upflung
Fell on the topmost rocks on either hand ;
But when the salt sea-water back she swung

“ Into the pool, the gulf beneath the bay
Shewed seething, and the reefs that round it lay
Roared with a dreadful din, and dark blue sand
Glimmered deep down ; and wan with fear were they.

THE ODYSSEY

“ But while in dread of doom our gaze we bent
Upon the whirlpool, Scylla swooped and rent
Six of my comrades from the hollow ship
That were for might of hand most excellent.

“ And to the swift ship turning back my eye
I saw their feet and hands caught up on high,
While for the last time upon me they called
And my name uttered with their dying cry.

“ As when upon a jutting point of land
With his long rod a fisher takes his stand
And strewing ground-bait for the lesser fish
Darts into the sea-water from his hand

“ The wild-ox horn that tips his lance, and each
He strikes is flung out gasping on the beach ;
So gasping they were dragged against the rock
Up where the fiend devoured them out of reach,

“ Screaming aloud and stretching out to me
Their helpless hands in awful agony.
Most piteous was that sight of all I bore
While I explored the pathways of the sea.

“ But when we safely past the rocks were gone
And Scylla and Charybdis dread, anon
Thence to the hallowed island of a God
We came, whereon the Sun, Hyperion,

BOOK TWELFTH

“ His goodly wide-browed kine was used to keep
At pasture, and his flocks of mighty sheep.
And out at sea in the black ship I heard
The cattle in the foldyard lowing deep,

“ And the sheep bleating : then into my mind
Came the word uttered by the prophet blind
Tiresias the Theban, and the track
Aeaeon Circe for my course assigned ;

“ Enjoining me with all the wit I had
Far from the isle of him who makes men glad,
The Sun, to hold aloof : and to my crew
I turned and spake to them with heart full sad :

“ Listen to me, ill-fortuned though you are,
While I declare the words oracular
Tiresias and Aeaeon Circe spake ;
For oft and oft they bade me keep afar

“ From this the island of the Sun whose ray
Makes mortals glad ; for on it sore decay,
They said, was destined for us : therefore row
The black ship past the island far away.

“ So said I, and the heart within them brake ;
And straight Eurylochus in anger spake :
Odysseus, terrible you are, in might
Exceeding, and your limbs no toil can shake.

THE ODYSSEY

“Surely of iron are you to the core,
Who suffer not your crew to go ashore,
Dropping with sleep and toil, that we may take
Upon the sea-girt isle one good meal more ;

“But bid that still our wandering vain we keep
Through the swift night amid the misty deep
Cruising far off the island : and at nights
Tempestuous winds, wreckers of ships, outleap :

“How may one then of sheer destruction fail
If suddenly upon him burst the gale
From South or stormy West that shatter ships,
And for protection not the Gods avail ?

“Nay, let us now the black night’s call obey,
That we may dress our supper while we stay
By the swift ship, and with the dawn embark
And launch her out on the wide water-way.

“So spake Eurylochus, and all my men
Murmured assenting : full well knew I then
That God devised against us evil things ;
And answering, spake in winged words again :

“Surely I cannot of my single hand,
Eurylochus, the might of all withstand.
Yet now take all of you a mighty oath
And swear to me that if upon this land

BOOK TWELFTH

“Oxen or sheep in herd or flock we find,
None through infatuation of his mind
Slay ox or sheep, but eat the food we had
From deathless Circe with contented mind.

“Thus answered I, and as I bade straightway
They bound themselves by oath. But now when they
Had sworn and taken oath, the well-wrought ship
We ran ashore within a hollow bay,

“Nigh where a spring uprose with water sweet.
Then my crew disembarking set their feet
On land, and dressed their supper heedfully,
Till they were satisfied with drink and meat.

“Then fell they for their comrades dear to mourn
Whom Scylla from the carven ship had torn
And eaten, till upon them weeping fell
Deep sleep. But when a third of night was worn

“And the stars southed, Zeus the Cloud-gatherer sent
Fierce tempest and a mighty wind that went
Roaring, and blotted sea and land with clouds,
And darkness rushed across the firmament.

“But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
Up a cave's cleft we hauled the ship anon
And made her fast upon the dancing-floor
Of nymphs and by the seats they sat upon.

THE ODYSSEY

“Thereafter an assembly on the beach
I called and thus amid them uttered speech :
In the swift ship is meat and drink enow,
O friends ; then let us not a hand outreach

“Upon the oxen, lest ill chance we reap.
Because these oxen and these mighty sheep
Are a dread God’s, the Sun, out of whose eyes
And ears we nothing hidden long may keep.

“So spake I, and my valiant-hearted men
Obeyed me : but a whole month onward then
Blew the South wind unceasing, or but backed
Into the East and veered to South again.

“Now for a while, so long as wheaten bread
And red wine lasted them, on these they fed
And from the oxen held away their hand,
Though pining sore for lack of livelihead.

“But when the store of victual now was all
Consumed out of the ship, then, held in thrall
By hunger, they went wandering up and down
For whatsoever to their hand might fall,

“Hunting for fowl or fishing in the bay
With crooked hooks, the hunger to allay
That pinched their bellies : but I went apart
Over the island to the Gods to pray,

BOOK TWELFTH

“ If any one might shew me of his grace
The way to go ; and being withdrawn a space
Across the isle out of my fellows’ sight,
Washing my hands within a sheltered space

“ I prayed to all the Gods in heaven who dwell ;
And then sweet slumber on mine eyelids fell ;
And then among my crew Eurylochus
Began to give advice that was not well :

“ Listen to me, O comrades evil-starred !
Though in all shapes to wretched men’s regard
Hateful is death, yet he who pines and dies
Of hunger has the lot of all most hard.

“ Of the Sun’s oxen therefore let us take
The goodliest, offering to the Gods to make,
Who hold wide heaven : and if to Ithaca
We come, our native country, for their sake

“ Straight will we to the Sun, Hyperion,
Rear a rich shrine and lay great gifts thereon ;
But if our ship he shatter in his wrath
For his high-horned oxen dead and gone,

“ With all the Gods assenting, yet would I
Drink the salt billow once for all and die
Rather than linger famished and at last
On a lone island dead of hunger lie.

THE ODYSSEY

“So spake Eurylochus ; and all the crew
Assenting, forthwith down to them they drew
The choicest of the oxen of the Sun ;
For nigh the blue-prowed ship their pasture grew.

“Fair-horned cattle wide across the brows
They sundered from the herd and offered vows
To heaven, from off a high umbrageous oak
Plucking the tender leafage of the boughs,

“Since of white barley-flour was left them none
In the benched ship ; and when their vows were done
They slaughtered them and flayed them and cut out
The thigh-pieces, and wrapping up each one

“In folded fat above it and below,
Bits of raw flesh they laid on it arow ;
And no wine had they for drink-offering
Upon the blazing sacrifice to throw,

“But sprinkling water on the inward meat
Set it to roast ; and when amid the heat
The thigh-pieces were burned, they fed upon
The entrails and cut up the rest to eat,

“And stuck it on the spits. And then straightway
The heavy slumber on my lids that lay
Lifted and fled, and I set forth to go
To the swift ship and margent of the bay.

BOOK TWELFTH

“ But to the balanced ship as I drew nigh,
Hot smell of burning fat that floated by
Smote on my senses ; and I groaned aloud
And to the deathless Gods sent up a cry :

“ Lord Zeus and blessed deathless Gods each one,
Now for my ruin you these toils have spun
Of cruel sleep ; and these I left behind,
My comrades, an ill deed have planned and done.

“ Then went Lampetie flowing-gowned anon
With tidings to the Sun, Hyperion,
That we had slain his oxen ; and in wrath
He spake among the Deathless Folk thereon :

“ Lord Zeus and blessed Gods who live alway,
Avenge me on Odysseus’ men this day,
Son of Laertes, who by violence
Have slain mine oxen : for my joy were they

“ Both when I mounted up the star-strewn plain,
And when to earth from heaven I turned again
My circling course ; and if they render not
Full recompense for these mine oxen slain,

“ To the Dark Realm will I my head decline,
Amid the mansion of the dead to shine.
Then answered the Cloud-gatherer Zeus, and spake :
Shine on, O Sun, upon the race divine

THE ODYSSEY

“ Who die not, and on mortals that are born
And die amid the acres of the corn ;
But quickly by my blazing thunderbolt
Shall their swift ship be smitten and upturn,

“ Amidmost of the wine-bright ocean-floor.
(This tale to me fair-tressed Calypso bore,
Saying that fleet-foot Hermes told it her)
But to the ship descending and the shore

“ I passed among them, sharply chiding each ;
But remedy was clean beyond our reach,
Seeing that the oxen were already dead :
And forthwith then among them on the beach

“ The Gods wrought miracles that pass men’s wit :
The flayed hides crawled, and round about the spit
The roast flesh and the raw began to low,
And voices as of oxen came from it.

“ Six days thereafter did my trusty crew
Feast on the oxen that they drove and slew,
The Sun-herd’s choicest. But when Cronus’ son,
Zeus, made the seventh day arise anew,

“ The fury of the tempest ceased anon,
And we embarked, and hasting to be gone
Launched out on the wide ocean, rearing up
The mast and spreading the white sails thereon.

BOOK TWELFTH

“ But when we dropped the isle, and no more land
Was seen, but sky and sea on every hand,
The son of Cronus made a dark blue cloud
Over the galley’s carven hull to stand.

“ And under it the ocean-floor grew black ;
And no long while she held upon her track ;
For swiftly a strong tempest from the west
Roaring came down and laid the ship aback ;

“ And a sharp gust snapped either forward stay
That held the mast up, and it fell away
Aft, carrying all the yards and rigging down,
That in a heap along the hold they lay ;

“ And on the after deck the steersman’s head
It struck, and smashed the bones and laid him dead,
And like a diver from the deck he fell,
As from his bones the valiant spirit fled.

“ Then in one moment out of heaven there came
A crash of thunder and a sheet of flame :
And the ship, smitten by the bolt of God,
Staggered from stem to stern through all her frame,

“ And filled with sulphurous vapour, and therefrom
The crew fell off, and on the billowing foam
Round the black ship like seafowl ere they sank
Went drifting: thus God stayed their journey home.

THE ODYSSEY

“ But up and down the ship I paced alone
Till all the planking of the sides was gone,
Wrenched from the keel that naked on the wave,
With the mast broken from it, floated on.

“ But on the mast one after-stay held fast,
Made of ox-hide ; with it I lashed the mast
And keel together, and on them I clung
Drifting along before the bitter blast.

“ Then the fierce west wind dropped and backed away
Into the south, and filled me with dismay,
Lest I should make Charybdis’ gulf once more :
All night I drifted on till break of day ;

“ And with the rise of sun rose up ahead
The rock of Scylla and Charybdis dread ;
And she the salt sea-water swallowed down,
But I to the wild fig tree’s boughs outspread

“ Reached up, and like a bat hung fastened there,
And could not win firm foothold anywhere,
Or get astride them ; for far off the roots
Grew, and the branches dangling out in air

“ Long shadowing arms above Charybdis hung ;
There desperately to the twigs I clung
Till she should vomit up the mast and keel ;
And late and longed-for were the spars outflung.

BOOK TWELFTH

“Not till the hour when a man rising up
Out of the market-place goes home to sup
From judging many suits of pleading men
Did the spars issue from the whirlpool’s cup.

“Then I my clinging hands and feet let go
From overhead, and to the flood below
Dropped with a splash alongside, and the spars
Bestriding, with my hands made shift to row.

“But of his grace the sire of Gods and men
Let me not come to Scylla’s eyes again ;
For then I needs had perished utterly.
On for a nine days’ space I floated then ;

“And on the tenth at night out of the sea
To that Far Island the Gods drifted me,
Calypso’s home, the fair-tressed mortal-voiced
Dread Goddess : and my friend and stay was she.

“Why should I tell this tale ? since yesternight
I told it in your house as best I might
To you and the Queen’s Highness : to repeat
A tale well told I reckon no delight.”

BOOK THIRTEENTH

HOW ODYSSEUS SAILED FROM THE PHAEACIANS
AND CAME TO ITHACA

SO spake he ; and in silence one and all
Held in enchantment down the shadowy hall
Sat still and stirred not, till Alcinous
Once more made answer and these words let fall :

“ Since to my home’s high roof and brazen floor
You come, Odysseus, now I deem no more
Shall you go wandering backward and astray,
Though you have borne much travail heretofore.

“ But now to each man I give charge and say,
Of you who in my palace every day
Sit at the council-board, the flame-bright wine
Drinking and listening to the minstrel’s lay :

“ In the smooth chest already lacks there nought
Of garments and gold curiously wrought,
And whatsoever gifts Phaeacia’s
Councillors hither for our guest have brought.

BOOK THIRTEENTH

“Let each man a great caldron and a stand
Add for him, and hereafter through the land
We will collect the price ; for hardly one
Such cost could lavish of his single hand.”

So spake Alcinous, and they gave assent.
Then each to his own house to sleep they went.
But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
Down to the ship they came incontinent,

Hasting the well-forged bronze aboard to bring :
And through the ship his Majesty the King
Alcinous passing, stowed it well away
Under the thwarts, that in their voyaging

It should not cumber any of the crew
When swift beneath their oars the galley flew.
Then to Alcinous' house to meat they went,
Where the King's Highness for the banquet slew

A bull to him who has dark clouds for pall,
Zeus, Cronus' son, who is the lord of all :
And having burned the thigh-pieces, they shared
A noble banquet, making festival ;

While at their feast the godlike minstrel sung,
Demodocus, well-prized the folk among ;
But oft and oft Odysseus turned his head
Impatient to the splendid sun that hung

THE ODYSSEY

In heaven, and for his longing sank too slow ;
Even as a man to supper longs to go,
Whose wine-red oxen all day long have drawn
Across the tilth the plough-frame to and fro ;

And welcome to him is the dusking grey
At sundown, when to supper go he may,
And his knees ache in going : with such joy
Odysseus watched the sunlight fade away.

Nor longer lingering into speech he broke,
And thus to the Phaeacian oarsmen spoke,
But singled out Alcinous with his word :
“ O prince Alcinous, lordliest of the folk,

“ Pour out drink-offering now, and let me go
In peace, and fare you well : for even so
Is all accomplished that my heart desired,
The convoy, and the gifts that you bestow ;

“ Which may the heavenly Gods ordain to be
Fair-fortuned, and vouchsafe to me to see
A blameless wife at home when I return,
And them that love me holding fast by me.

“ But long may you abide with joy to crown
Your wedded wives and children in this town :
May the Gods minister all excellence,
And no ill fortune on the folk come down.”

BOOK THIRTEENTH

So spake he ; and they all with one accord
Applauding, bade the guest be put aboard,
Since he had spoken in such courteous wise :
Then to the herald said the king their lord :

“ Pontonous, mix a wine-bowl and bestow
A draught to all who sit in hall arow,
That having worshipped Zeus our sire we may
Send forth our guest to his own land to go.”

So spake he ; and the wine as honey sweet
Pontonous mixed and dealt it as is meet ;
And to the blessed Gods who hold wide heaven
They poured drink-offering, each one on his seat.

Then bright Odysseus rising from his chair
Stood forth before Arete's face, and there
Laid in her hand the cup with double rim,
And thus in winged words he spake her fair :

“ O Queen, fare well until upon you fall
Old age and death, that are the lot of all.
I go : may you be happy in your lord
And folk and children in this kingly hall.”

Even on the word across the threshold's rim
Went bright Odysseus, and along with him
His Majesty the King a herald sent
For guide to the swift ship and the sea-brim.

THE ODYSSEY

And to the women whom she had in thrall
Arete gave command that one from hall
Should bear a clean-washed cloak and shirt, and one
The chest close-fastened ; and a third withal

Red wine and bread the mariners to stay.
So to the ship and sea descending they
Came, and the proud escorting mariners
Took the stuff in and stowed it all away,

Both meat and drink, in the ship's hold to keep ;
And on the deck-spars for Odysseus' sleep
They spread a couch astern with linen sheets
And blankets, that he there might slumber deep.

And in he got and laid him down alone
Silently, and the oarsmen every one
In order at the benches sitting down
Undid the hawser from the channeled stone.

Then reaching forward they flung up the sea
With all their oar-blades ; and immediately
Deep sleep delicious fell upon his lids,
Unwakening, such as death itself might be.

But she, as when four stallions yoked arow
Upon the level leaping forward go
Together, and bound high beneath the lash,
Lightly the way devouring, even so

BOOK THIRTEENTH

Her stern upsprang and from her quarter leapt
A great dark wave and roaring backward swept.
Unswerving on she ran, and with her flight
Not even the ger-falcon pace had kept,

Fleetest of flying things : thus on she bore,
And swiftly through the ocean-billow shore,
Bearing a man in wisdom like the Gods ;
Even him who oft in spirit heretofore

In wars of men had borne calamity
And in the harsh waves of the cloven sea :
But now at last, forgetting all the woes
He had endured, he slumbered peacefully.

Now at the hour when brightest shone on high
The star that comes to herald up the sky
The dawning of the morning, even then
The ship sea-travelling to the isle drew nigh.

The fields of Ithaca a haven hold
Called after Phorcys' name, the Sea-God old.
Two jutting headlands breaking sheer in cliff
Stretch seaward, and the harbour-mouth enfold.

These from without keep back the surge and din
Of the great wind-blown billows, and within
May goodly-benched galleys all unmoored
Ride, when the chosen anchorage they win.

THE ODYSSEY

But at the haven head an olive tree's
Wide-stretching boughs outspread, and nigh to these
A cavern dim and lovely, to the nymphs
Held hallowed that are called the Naiades.

In it are mixing-bowls and jars of stone
Where the bees build their combs, and high upgrown
Stone looms, whereon the nymphs their marvellous
Raiment of dim sea-purple weave alone.

And in it waters failing not in drouth
Well forth ; and twofold is the cavern mouth :
One toward the North accessible to men,
And one diviner facing to the South :

Nor do men enter through it, but that door
Is for immortals. Thither they, of yore
Knowing it well, rowed in the ship full speed
To land, that half her keel's length lay ashore :

So swift she sped beneath the oarsmen's hand ;
And from the benched ship upon dry land
They leapt and from the ship's hold lifted out
Odysseus first and laid him on the sand,

In linen sheet and broidered blanket gay
Still wrapped, as fast in slumber deep he lay.
And out they lifted next the goods and gear
That, when they sent him on his homeward way,

BOOK THIRTEENTH

The proud Phaeacians gave him, through the art
And counsel of Athena great of heart :
And these they laid beside the olive-stem
All in a heap out of the road apart,

Lest haply some one of wayfaring men,
While yet Odysseus slumbered, passing then
Might rob him of his wealth : and thereupon
They turned them back to seek their home again.

Nor did the Shaker of the Earth forget
That menace uttered, and his ancient threat
Against divine Odysseus, and of Zeus
Made question if he held his purpose yet :

“O Zeus our Lord, my worship shall be high
No more among the Gods who do not die,
When the Phaeacians fail to honour me,
Being mortal, and their ancestor am I.

“Since for Odysseus now I vowed that he
His home should win through many a misery,
Yet utterly bereft not his return ;
For such your purpose was and your decree.

“Yet notwithstanding, while he lay asleep,
In a swift ship these men across the deep
Have borne and set him down in Ithaca,
And gifts have given him, an abundant heap,

THE ODYSSEY

“Of bronze and gold and woven rich array,
Such as Odysseus had not brought away
From Troy, though scathless home he had returned
With his allotted portion of her prey.”

And answering spake to him cloud-gathering Zeus:
“Alas! what word is this your lips let loose,
Strong Shaker of the Earth? the Gods to you
Do no disgrace; it were foul breach of use

“Him to dishonour who is first by birth
And excellence; but if of men on earth
Is any of his might and force so fain
That he will scant your worship of its worth,

“For all time after the repayment due
Is yours to take as best it pleases you.”
Then answered him the Shaker of the Earth
Poseidon: “Thus I presently will do,

“Lord of dark clouds, according as you say.
Yet your displeasure I regard alway
And shun it; but the fair Phaeacian ship
Now, while amid the ocean misty-grey

“From convoy she returns, it is my will
To shatter, that they henceforth may be still
And cease from giving convoy to mankind;
And round their town to cast a mighty hill.”

BOOK THIRTEENTH

To him cloud-gathering Zeus returned reply :

“ O well-beloved, do herein as I

Deem best ; when all the people from the town

Look out and see her drawing swiftly nigh,

“ Then smite her into stone that shall appear

The likeness of a swift ship sailing near,

For all mankind to see and marvel at ;

And round their town a mighty hill uprear.”

But when the Shaker of the Earth had heard

He went his way to Scheria on the word,

Where the Phaeacians dwell, and there abode,

Till when the swift ship, skimming like a bird,

Drew close, the Shaker of the Earth anon

Approaching smote her to a ship of stone,

And with his prone hand down to the sea-floor

Rooted her fast, and presently was gone.

But the long-oared Phaeacians on the beach

Stood and sent winged words from each to each :

And of those famous mariners would one

Look on his neighbour and thus utter speech :

“ Ah, who is he who stays the galley's prow

In mid-sea on her journey ? even now

Full in our sight she hasted.” So they spake,

And wist not what had come to pass, nor how.

THE ODYSSEY

Then out and spake Alcinous in dismay
Amid the people : “ Woe is me ! to-day
Come to my mind those ancient oracles
My father spake : Poseidon, he would say,

“ Bore jealousy against us, for that we
Give secure convoy to all men that be,
And sometime a fair-wrought Phaeacian ship
Would smite, returning on the misty sea

“ From convoy, and cast up a mighty hill
Around our city. Thus the old man still
Said, and his words are being brought to pass.
Come now, all you, and my behest fulfil.

“ Cease from convoying mortals on their way,
Whoso shall reach our city from this day ;
And to Poseidon let us sacrifice
Twelve chosen bulls, if pity us he may,

“ And a great mountain-ridge forbear to rear
Around our city.” So he spake : and fear
Took hold on them ; and they prepared the bulls,
And to the Prince Poseidon drawing near

With prayer, about his altar took their stand,
Both councillor and captain, all the band
Of the Phaeacian folk : and out of sleep
Woke bright Odysseus in his native land :

BOOK THIRTEENTH

And knew it not, being now long absent thence ;
For round him a miraculous vapour dense
Pallas Athena shed, the maid of Zeus,
To make him unperceived to mortal sense

Ere she informed him fully, so that he
To wife and friends and citizens should be
Unknown, until he had avenged in full
Upon the suitors all their injury.

Wherefore of strange and unfamiliar guise
Shewed all things there before the prince's eyes,
Long-stretching roads and sheltered anchorage
And the steep cliffs and trees of goodly size.

So up he sprang and on his native land
Looked round, and with the palm of either hand
Smiting his thighs he groaned and spake a word :
“ O me, in what men's country do I stand ?

“ A savage people, lawless and unkind,
Or hospitable and of godly mind ?
Whither shall I convey this load of goods
Or where for mine own self a refuge find ?

“ Would God that I had chosen there to stay
With the Phaeacians : then had I one day
Come to some other mighty king, and he
Befriended me and sent me on my way.

THE ODYSSEY

“ Now truly where I may bestow this gear
I know not, but I will not leave it here,
Lest strangers plunder it. Alas, in vain
A name for wisdom and for godly fear

“ Phaeacia’s lords and councillors have got,
Who led me hither to an unknown spot
Promising that to far-seen Ithaca
They would convey me, and have done it not.

“ Zeus from his mercy-seat their wrong repay
Who sees and judges men that go astray !
Now let me look and count my goods to see
If aught in the ship’s hold they bore away.”

So saying, the caldrons and the stands to hold
The same he counted over, and the gold
And the fair woven raiment ; and of all
Nothing he missed ; but his own land of old

With many sighs and moans lamented he,
As by the shore of the resounding sea
He crept slow-pacing. Then to him came nigh
Athena ; and the bodily guise had she

Of a young man who has the flocks in care,
One delicately bred and debonair,
As are the sons of princes ; in a cloak
Twy-folded of a web well wrought and fair

BOOK THIRTEENTH

About her shoulders hanging she was clad,
And underneath her shining feet she had
Sandals, and in her hand a hunting-spear :
And her Odysseus when he saw was glad,

And coming nigh her, thus with utterance fleet
He spake : " O stranger, you whom first I greet
Upon this land, I bid you hail and pray
No evil to devise on him you meet.

" Save this my treasure, save me in my need ;
For here to you as to a God I plead,
And fall before your knees : and answer me
Truly this thing, that I may know indeed ;

" What land, what people is it ? of what strain
Are its indwellers ? is it one seen plain
Among the islands, or some cape that lies
Stretching to seaward from the fertile main ? "

To him the Goddess with the eyes of grey,
Athena, answered then : " From far away
You come, O stranger, or are scant of wit,
Who ask the land's name where you are this day.

" Not all so nameless is it : many an one
Knows it, both they who toward the rising sun
Dwell and the dawn, and they who live aloof
Back where the western skies with mist are dun.

THE ODYSSEY

“Rough is it, not for chariot-driving fit,
No broad land, yet not barren every whit,
For on it corn abundantly and wine
Grow, and the rain and rich dew fail not it.

“So that its pasturage for goats is good
And oxen : it has every sort of wood,
And springs that last all summer : yea, O friend,
Even to Troy has reached by likelihood

“The name of Ithaca, though that, men say,
From the Achæan land is far away.”
So spake she ; and toilworn Odysseus bright
Took comfort, when to quit him of dismay

The maid of Zeus the Thunder-bearer told
That on the land his fathers held of old
He stood : and answering her in winged words
He spoke, but yet devising to withhold

The truth from her, took up his tale again
With coinage of his ever-scheming brain,
And answered : “Yea, of Ithaca have I
Heard in wide Troy afar across the main.

“And now have I mine own self come to be
Therein, and bring this treasure that you see ;
And to my children leave as much behind
For portion in the land whereout I flee :

BOOK THIRTEENTH

“ For that I slew Orsilochus the fleet
Son of Idomeneus, whom none in Crete
Equalled, of all on her broad lands who win
Wealth by their trade, in swiftness of his feet.

“ Because his purpose was of all the spoil
Of Troy to rob me, that through many a broil
Of warring men and through the cloven waves
Of the harsh sea I won with grief and toil.

“ Since to his father in the Trojan land
I paid no suit nor service, but a band
Of my own fellows I commanded : him
Out of the fields descending nigh at hand

“ With the bronze-headed spear, from where I lay
In ambush with one comrade nigh the way,
I smote ; and dark night covered all the sky
That no man marked us and none saw me slay.

“ But when with the sharp bronze his life I tore,
Down to a ship I fled that lay ashore,
And to her proud Phoenician crew made suit,
Giving them of my spoils abundant store,

“ That they should take aboard and bear me thence
To Pylos, or bright Elis, whose defence
Are the Epean warriors. But, though hard
Labouring against it, the wind's violence

THE ODYSSEY

“Pushed them to sea, nor meant they any guile :
Thence wandering off our course we made this isle
By night, and up the harbour hastily
Rowed, and of supper took no thought the while,

“Though hungered sore ; but disembarking we
All as we were lay down beside the sea.
There sweet sleep overcame me wearied out ;
And from the carven ship they hastily

“Lifting my goods out laid them by the way
Where my own self on the sea-beach I lay,
And taking ship for well-built Sidon sailed :
But I was left alone and in dismay.”

So said he ; and the grey-eyed Goddess bland,
Athena, smiled and stroked him with her hand :
And like a woman tall and fair and skilled
In noble works before him seemed to stand.

And answering him in winged words said she :
“Artful indeed and subtle would he be
Who, meeting you, in any sort of guile
Outdid you, even though a God were he.

“Hardy of heart, insatiate of deceit,
Full of devices ! so you thought not meet
Even in your own land to lay aside
Your treacheries and your words that love to cheat.

BOOK THIRTEENTH

“ But now no longer let us talk thereof,
Being both well practised in the craft we love :
Since you in counsel and in tale-telling
Are far away all mortal men above ;

“ Even as I all Gods in fame excel
Of craft and wisdom. Yet you knew not well
Pallas Athena now, the maid of Zeus,
Who stand beside you danger to repel

“ In all your labours, and have made you dear
In sight of all Phaeacia, and appear
Now once again beside you to devise
Counsel with you and hide this treasure here

“ That at your going, by my art and thought,
The lordly people of Phaeacia brought,
And tell you all the troubles you are yet
Fated to bear within your house well-wrought.

“ Yet notwithstanding must your heart be strong,
And tell no man nor woman that from long
Wandering you come, but many sorrows yet
Endure in silence, and abide men's wrong.”

And answering spake Odysseus wise of heart :
“ Hard work it is to know thee who thou art,
Goddess, for any mortal meeting thee,
Though he be very skilful for his part.

THE ODYSSEY

“For into any shape thou canst compel
Thy deity : but this I know full well,
Kind thou wast once toward me, while in Troy
The sons of the Achaeans fought and fell.

“But since we stormed and sacked the high-built home
Of Priam, and aboard our galleys clomb,
And God dispersed the Achaean host, since then,
O maid of Zeus, I have not seen thee come,

“Nor noted thee aboard my ship that so
In some wise thou mightst shelter me from woe :
But ever with a heart disconsolate
In wretchedness I wandered to and fro ;

“Till the Gods loosed me from the grievous band ;
And then in the Phaeacians’ fruitful land
Thou camest, and with words didst comfort me,
And lead me to the city with thine hand.

“In thy sire’s name I kneel before thee now
With prayer ; for not to Ithaca I trow,
The far-seen island, am I come, but lost
In some strange country stray I wot not how ;

“And deem that thou these words in mockery
Dost utter to beguile the sense in me :
Tell me, I pray, is this in very truth
Mine own dear native country that I see ?”

BOOK THIRTEENTH

Then spoke the Goddess with the eyes of grey,
Athena, and made answer : " Such alway
The understanding is within your breast :
Therefore I cannot leave you night or day

" In evil fortune, for that subtle-souled
And deft of speech you are and self-controlled.
For glad might any other wanderer be
At home his wife and children to behold :

" But you naught else desire to learn or know
Ere yet your wife you prove, if it be so
She keeps your palace, and the nights and days
Pass wearily amid her tears' downflow.

" Howbeit of this I doubted not, but knew
That though your comrades perished, yet should you
Come safely ; but against my grandsire's son
Contend I would not, in whose heart there grew

" Deep wrath at you for blinding of his son.
Look, I will shew you now, that doubt be done,
Ithaca's borders. This the haven is
Named after Phorcys old, the sea-born one :

" Here at the haven head the olive tree's
Wide-stretching boughs outspread, and nigh to these
The cavern dim and lovely, to the nymphs
Held hallowed, that are called the Naiades.

THE ODYSSEY

“This is the cave roofed over, where you stood
Oft-time of old and to the nymphs made good
Your vows with perfect hecatombs ; and this
Is Neriton, the mountain clad with wood.”

So saying, the Goddess smote apart the mist,
And much-enduring bright Odysseus wist,
As the ground shewed, that his own land he trod,
And glad the acres of the corn he kissed.

Then straightway to the nymphs in prayer he fell
With hands outstretched : “ O maidens of the well,
Daughters of Zeus, I deemed that surely I
Should never more behold you where you dwell.

“ With prayer and humble supplication now
I bid you hail, and gifts to give I vow
As once of old, if she who drives the prey,
God’s daughter, life to me in grace allow,

“ And to my son, that grow to age he may.”
Thereat the Goddess with the eyes of grey,
Athena, spoke and answered : “ Take good cheer,
And let not these things cause your heart dismay.

“ Now let us haste your treasure to bestow
In a recess the holy cave below
To keep it safe for you : and afterward
Let us take counsel how things best may go.”

BOOK THIRTEENTH

So saying, the Goddess up the cavern dim
Passed in, and hiding-places sought for him.
But all the stuff Odysseus carried nigh,
The gold and tempered bronze and garments trim

That the Phaeacians gave him of their store :
And these in order on the cavern floor
The maid of Zeus the Lord of Thunderclouds
Laid by, and with a stone sealed up the door.

Then by the trunk of holy olive they
Sat and devised between them how to slay
The lawless suitors ; and Athena first,
The grey-eyed Goddess, thus began to say :

“ Son of Laertes, high-born, subtle-souled
Odysseus, counsel now I bid you hold
How on the shameless suitors you shall fall,
Who have this three years' space your house controlled :

“ While to your godlike wife with gifts they sue
Who evermore laments and yearns for you,
Promise and hope to each man holding out
And sending tokens, but her mind is true.”

And subtle-souled Odysseus made reply :
“ Alas, it was predestined sure that I
Even as Agamemnon Atreus' son
An evil death in mine own house should die,

THE ODYSSEY

“ Hadst thou not told me all in order now,
Goddess : then frame the web of counsel how
I may avenge me on them, and stand by
To give me might and courage, even thou,

“ As when the kerchief bright of Troy we twain
Rent from her head : for if thou still remain
So keen to succour me, O Grey-eyed One,
Against three hundred men were I right fain

“ Battle to wage, if thou thine aid bestow,
Goddess and mistress, and thy favour shew.”
Thereto the grey-eyed Goddess answer made :
“ Yea verily will I beside you go,

“ And not forget you when this work in hand
We take : and some, I deem, among the band
Of suitors who devour your heritage
With blood and brains shall spatter all the land.

“ Now come, to make you mortal sight within
Incognisable, I the goodly skin
Upon your supple limbs will shrivel up,
And turn your bright brown tresses grey and thin,

“ And cover you with rags that they who see
Shall loathe a man arrayed so wretchedly,
And your two eyes that were exceeding bright
Aforetime will make dim, that you may be

BOOK THIRTEENTH

“ Of mean aspect before the suitors all,
And your own wife, and him you left in hall,
Your child. Now go you to the swineherd first
Who of your swine is warder, but withal

“ Keeps a kind heart, and full of love is he
For your young son and chaste Penelope.
Him you shall light on sitting by the swine
That near the Raven's Cliff at pasture be,

“ And Arethusa's well within the wood
That rises, where they eat abundant food
Of fattening acorns, and the water dark
Drink, that makes flesh of swine grow fat and good.

“ Abide there sitting by him till I come,
And question him of all things in your home,
While I to Sparta go, the land that breeds
Fair women, that 'Telemachus therefrom,

“ Your own dear son, Odysseus, I may call ;
Who is gone forth to Menelaus' hall
In wide-lawned Lacedaemon, to inquire
Tidings of you, if yet you live at all.'

And subtle-souled Odysseus made reply :
“ Nay, but O thou who knowest all things, why
Didst thou not tell him ? was thy will belike
That he should also suffer, even as I,

THE ODYSSEY

“ Hard fare, across the sea unharvested
To wander, while men waste his livelihood ? ”
So spoke he : but Athena thereupon,
The grey-eyed Goddess, answered him and said :

“ Let not your heart for him be troubled so.
Myself I sent him, that his fame might grow
On high from this same journey ; and no toil
Suffers he now, but sits at ease below

“ The roof of Atreus’ son, and at his hand
Is all abundance. But a youthful band
In their black ship lay wait for him, full fain
To slay him, ere he reach his native land.

“ Nevertheless their purpose shall not hold,
I trow, but sooner underneath the mould
Shall some of these same suitors lie who now
Devour the substance that was yours of old.”

So saying, with the rod her hand within
Athena touched him ; and the goodly skin
Upon his supple limbs she shrivelled up,
And turned his bright brown tresses grey and thin ;

And as an ancient man in every limb
Withered and aged him, and both eyes made dim
That were exceeding bright before, and changed
His coat and shirt, and mean rags laid on him,

BOOK THIRTEENTH

Tattered and filthy, all begrimed with smoke,
And cast about his shoulders for a cloak
The great unlined skin of a fleetfoot doe,
And gave to him the staff of beggar-folk,

And a mean wallet, a right ragged one,
Slung by a strap. So they, their counsel done,
Parted ; and she to Lacedaemon bright
Went on her way to seek Odysseus' son.

BOOK FOURTEENTH

THE CONVERSE OF ODYSSEUS WITH EUMAEUS

BUT from the harbour to the rough ascent
Setting his face among the rocks he went
Up through the woodland, where Athena told
That he should find the swineherd excellent ;

Who for his substance cared the most of all
The folk whom bright Odysseus had in thrall.
Him in the forecourt of the house he found
Sitting within the high-built courtyard wall,

Both great and goodly, giving ample bound
Of prospect, with a clearing all around ;
That he for his long absent master's swine
Had built with boulders gathered from the ground,

Far from his mistress and Laertes old,
And coped it with dry thorn to make a fold,
With stout posts driven outside it every way
Into the ground as close as they could hold,

BOOK FOURTEENTH

Made of split oaken core ; and in the yard
Twelve styes he framed each nigh to each, and barred
Fifty brood-swine in each : but less in tale
Were the boar-pigs that slept in the outer ward.

For the proud suitors wasted them away
In feasting, since the swineherd every day
Sent them the goodliest of the fatted hogs ;
So but three hundred and threescore were they.

And by them four hounds alway made their bed,
Half savage, by the master swineherd bred.
But he was cutting shoes to fit his feet
From a tanned oxhide by his side outspread.

And of his herdsmen three were passed abroad
Herding the swine-droves, each a separate road,
While to the town the fourth was on his way
Driving to where the suitors proud abode,

As needs he must, a hog for them to kill
That they upon the flesh might feast their fill.
At once the baying hounds espying him
Gave tongue and ran at him with evil will.

But down Odysseus in his subtlety
Crouched, and let fall his staff : and there had he
By his own steading in unseemly wise
Been mangled ; but the swineherd hastily

THE ODYSSEY

Sprang up, and from his hand the hide let fall
And ran swift-footed by the forecourt wall,
Chiding his hounds, and putting them to flight
With stones, and to his master spake withal :

“ O aged man, full little to your bane
Therelacked, by these my hounds pulled down and slain;
Whence shame had covered me, beyond all else
The Gods have given me of distress and pain.

“ Since for my godlike master, sitting here,
In lamentable wise I mourn, and rear
The fatted hogs for other men to eat,
While he for lack of food makes evil cheer

“ In alien lands and cities far away,
If yet he lives and sees the light of day.
But follow me, old man, into the hut
That you with bread and wine your heart may stay.

“ Thereafter shall you tell me, as is meet,
Whence you have come, and all the tale repeat
Of your distress.” So saying, the swineherd good
Led him indoors and set him on a seat ;

Heaping a couch beneath him therewithin
Of brushwood, and a wild goat's shaggy skin
Thick-haired and large, his own bed's covering.
Glad was Odysseus welcome thus to win ;

BOOK FOURTEENTH

And spake a word and uttered : “ Now may still
Zeus and the other deathless Gods fulfil,
O friend, the utmost of your heart’s desire,
For that you give me welcome with good will.”

And answering spake you, herder of the swine,
Eumaeus : “ Nay, my friend, the wrong were mine
To scorn a stranger, were he worse than you.
Strangers and beggars are in care divine.

“ How small soe’er, the grace to these we shew
Is precious. But with bondsmen is it so
That alway they have dread of mastery
When to young masters they their service owe.

“ Sure by the Gods cut off from home is he
Who well had loved me and provided me
With house and holding and a wife for whom
Many made suit : for such the gifts may be

“ That a kind-hearted master to his thrall
Assigns, who bears much toil for him, and all
God prospers in his hand, as here the work
Is prosperous, whereto day by day I fall.

“ Wherefore my master had an ampler wage
Given me, if here he had attained old age.
But he is perished : would that Helen first
Had perished, she and all her lineage !

THE ODYSSEY

“Through whom the knees of many a man bowed down;
Since that for Agamemnon’s soiled renown
He too to Ilion nurse of goodly steeds
Went forth to fight against the Trojan town.”

So saying, round his shirt the belt he drew
And to the styes passed out, where all the crew
Of hogs were penned, and thence a pair of them
Caught up and fetched, and both of them he slew

And singed and jointed, and through every bit
A spit he ran, and having roasted it
Drew it from off the fire and by his lord
Odysseus laid it, smoking on the spit.

Then over it white barley-flour he strewed
And mingled in a bowl of ivy-wood
Wine sweet as honey, and himself sat down
Opposite him and bade him to his food :

“Eat now, O guest, the victual of a thrall,
Meat of young pigs ; but to the suitors fall
The fatted hogs ; and for the Watchers they
Care not, nor in their heart have ruth at all.

“The blessed Gods in wrong take no delight,
But honour justice and deeds done aright
By men : yea, even enemies and foes
Who go against an alien land to fight,

BOOK FOURTEENTH

“ And Zeus gives ample plunder to their hand,
That they embark and get them to their land
With ships full-laden, even on them great fear
Falls of the Watchers high in heaven who stand.

“ But somewhat these men know, or rumour borne
From God has reached them that his life is lorn,
Wherefore they will not woo in righteousness
Nor go to their own dwellings, but in scorn

“ His substance at their ease consume away
And keep no thrift : day follows after day,
Night after night from God, and upon each
Not one beast only nor a pair they slay ;

“ And in their wasteful pride his wine outpour ;
For he of substance had unmeasured store.
None of the princes had such wealth as he
On the black mainland or this island shore.

“ The wealth he had a score of men might well
Fail to make up ; and I its tale will tell :
Twelve herds of cattle and as many flocks
Of fleecy sheep that on the mainland dwell ;

“ Twelve herds of swine are his, with feeding-ground
For each ; as many flocks of goats around
Wide pastures ranging, some by foreigners
And some by his own herdsmen kept in bound.

THE ODYSSEY

“ And on this island’s limit ranging wide
Eleven flocks of goats, and by their side
Good men to guard them, of whom each for these
Must every day a fatted goat provide,

“ The best he has : but I the livelong year
Over the swine that you see feeding here
Keep watch and ward, and singling out therefrom
The choicest, send it in to make them cheer.”

So spake he ; and on flesh and wine he fed
In eager haste, nor any word he said,
But evil things against the suitors planned.
But when with food his heart was comforted,

He his own drinking-cup, his thirst to slake,
Filled up with wine and handed him to take,
And he received it and rejoiced at heart
And uttering voice in winged words he spake :

“ Friend, who is this same lord so rich and strong
To whom by fee and purchase you belong,
According to your tale, and who you say
Perished avenging Agamemnon’s wrong ?

“ Say, if perchance I know of such an one ;
For Zeus and all the deathless Gods alone
Can tell if having seen him I may bring
Tidings of him, who far and wide have gone.”

BOOK FOURTEENTH

Thereto the master swineherd made reply :
“ O ancient one, no wanderer coming nigh
With tidings of that man, his wife and son
To credence of his tale might win thereby.

“ But vagrants, who would be entreated well,
Forge random lies, and truth they will not tell.
And whosoever in his wanderings
Comes to this folk in Ithaca who dwell,

“ Goes to my mistress with a tale of lies
Framed to deceive her ; and in friendly wise
She welcomes him and asks of everything,
Letting tears fall from her distressful eyes :

“ As a wife will, whose husband far away
Has perished : and you too, old man, to-day
Some false tale soon would frame, if any one
A shirt and cloak would give you for array.

“ But long ago have dogs and birds fleet-flown
Rent him and gnawn the skin from off the bone,
And lifeless is he left, or in the deep
Fish have devoured him, and his bones alone

“ Lie on the beach, wrapped in a drift of sand :
Thus has he perished, leaving to the land
Where he was loved, and most of all to me,
Grief : for I shall not light at any hand

THE ODYSSEY

“ Upon another master who would be
So gracious ; not were I again to see
My father’s and my mother’s house, where first
I was begotten, and they nurtured me.

“ Yet not for them so grievously I mourn,
Though fain to see the home where I was born
And them that bare me, as I grieve and pine
Because Odysseus from our sight is lorn.

“ Therefore, O stranger, him who is not here
I name in reverence ; for he held me dear
And cared for me at heart ; and worshipful
I call him, though he never more appear.”

And toilworn bright Odysseus made reply :
“ O friend, since thus all comfort you deny,
Saying he will not come, and disbelieve
Assurance, not at random speak will I.

“ Odysseus comes, I tell you and I swear :
And you, for price of this good news I bear,
Give me a shirt and cloak when he has reached
His dwelling, goodly garments for my wear.

“ But nought ere then shall you bestow on me,
Though sore I need it : for abhorred is he
Even as the gates of hell to me, who speaks
Deceitful words through stress of poverty.

BOOK FOURTEENTH

“First of the Gods then I take Zeus this day
To witness, and your friendly board’s array,
And noble Odysseus’ hearth to which I come,
My word’s fulfilment now is on its way.

“Odysseus comes : and ere this month be run,
With this moon vanished or the next begun,
Home he shall reach, and vengeance take on those
Who ill-entreat his wife and princely son.”

And answering spake you, herder of the swine,
Eumaeus : “Aged man, as I divine,
Unpaid your tidings shall remain, nor home
Shall come Odysseus : sit and drink your wine ;

“While of some other thing our talk we frame,
But speak not of him more as though he came :
For my heart grieves within me, whensoever
Mention is made of my good master’s name.

“Let the oath pass : yet would to God that he
Might come, as of his coming fain are we,
Myself and the high prince Telemachus
And old Laertes and Penelope.

“But now I may not with my grief be done
For young Telemachus, Odysseus’ son,
Whom the Gods made like a green shoot to grow,
And among men I hoped he should be one

THE ODYSSEY

“ No worser than his father, strong of limb
And fair ; but some God surely has made dim
His inward judgment, or some man perchance,
For tidings of his father sending him

“ To goodly Pylos : for whose coming by
The haughty suitors now in ambush lie,
To make without a name from Ithaca
The lineage of divine Arceisias die.

“ Now let us leave him, whether in their gin
He shall be taken, or deliverance win
And Cronus’ son hold over him from high
His hand ; but you, old man, the tale begin

“ Of your own woes ; and this thing tell me true
That I may know it : who and whence are you ?
Where is your town and kindred ? of what land
The ship whereon you voyaged hereunto ?

“ How was it that to Ithaca to-day
Her mariners conveyed you ? who did they
Vouch them to be ? for not on foot I deem
Hither you came across the watery way.”

And subtle-souled Odysseus made reply :
“ Surely in naught will I the truth deny :
If but we two had store of food and wine
Feasting within the hut at ease to lie,

BOOK FOURTEENTH

“ While the rest went to work, I well might fill
A whole year with my story and be still
Telling my tale of woe and all the toils
The Gods have made me suffer by their will.

“ Out of wide Crete I vouch to draw my race,
A rich man's son, within whose dwelling-place
Many another son was born and bred
In bond of wedlock, but my birth was base,

“ Whose mother was a purchased concubine :
And yet the father whom I name for mine,
Castor the Hylacid, esteemed me not
Less than the children of his lawful line.

“ Now he among the Cretan folk had praise
Even as a God for wealth and prosperous days
And noble offspring, till the weirds of death
Carried him off adown the darkling ways.

“ Then his proud sons the substance he had got
Parted among them, dealing it by lot
For their possession, but to me assigned
A small inheritance and scanty plot.

“ Nevertheless I took a wife to mate
From a rich house and kin of high estate,
Through my own valour ; for no weakling then
Was I, nor one who quailed in war's debate.

THE ODYSSEY

“Now are all these things passed away from me :
Yet even from this dry stubble that you see
What the blade was I deem you may discern,
Though I am laden with much misery.

“For Ares and Athena made to grow
Courage in me, and strength to break the foe :
And when I chose picked men for ambushment
To bring to pass the enemy's overthrow,

“Never through fear I failed to play the man
Or shrank from death, but far before the van
Charging I caught and with my spear struck down
The foemen whom my swifter feet outran.

“Such in war was I : but not dear to me
Was daily labour and the husbandry
That breeds men goodly children ; but delight
I took in oared ships perpetually,

“And wars and arrows and the whetted spear,
Grim things that palsy many a man with fear :
But different men in different work delight,
And what God taught me, that to me was dear.

“For ere the Achæan host upon the land
Of Troy set foot, nine times I led a band
Of men and swift ships against alien folk
To war, and got much plunder to my hand.

BOOK FOURTEENTH

“ Abundant spoil I gathered of my own,
And more thereafter when the lots were thrown ;
And fast my substance grew, till I in Crete
A worshipful and honoured man was grown.

“ But when far-sounding Zeus the road of woe
Ordained for us, that many a man laid low,
Me and renowned Idomeneus they bade
To Iliou on the ships as captains go.

“ And to escape might no device be found,
So hard the people's voices held us bound.
And there we sons of the Achaeans warred
Nine years, and in the tenth we cast to ground

“ The town of Priam, and put forth to sea
For home, and God to go their ways let free
The Achaean host ; but Zeus the Counsellor
An evil counsel took, alas, for me.

“ For but one month abode I free from strife
Glad in my children and my wedded wife
And my possessions ; and my spirit then
Moved me once more to the old seafaring life ;

“ To voyage forth to the Egyptian land
With a good fellowship : nine ships I manned,
For the folk gathered to me speedily.
Then for a six days' space my trusty band

THE ODYSSEY

“Fed on the beasts I furnished, many an one,
That sacrifice might to the Gods be done
And they make cheer. But on the seventh day
Weighing from wide Crete we began to run

“Before a wind that blowing steadily
From northward, sped us lightly oversea
As though down stream we sailed ; nor did a ship
Take damage, but from death and sickness free

“We sat, while wind and helmsman on their way
Drove them ahead : and so on the fifth day
We reached the Egyptian river's goodly flood
And moored in it the rocking galleys lay.

“Then to my good crews I gave charge that thence
They should not stir, but be the ships' defence
And keep close by them, while to the hill tops
Pickets I sent : but they by insolence

“Led onward, and with pride of strength fulfilled,
The goodly fields that the Egyptians tilled
Ravaged, and from them carried off their wives
And infant children, and their men they killed.

“And quickly to the city ran the shout,
And horse and foot with break of dawn came out
Filling the plain with glitter of bronze arms ;
And Zeus the Thunderer cast an evil rout

BOOK FOURTEENTH

“On us, that no one durst against them stand ;
For doom encompassed us on every hand.
Many with the sword’s edge they slew, and some
Bore off alive, in chains to till their land.

“But Zeus himself within my spirit set
This counsel—would that I had paid my debt
And perished there in Egypt ! but mischance
Kept open house to entertain me yet.

“Straight from my head the helmet fitting fast
I flung away, and off my shoulders cast
The shield, and from my hand let fall the spear ;
And to the chariot of their king I passed,

“And fell before him clasping either knee
With kisses : and he saved and rescued me
And took me up into the chariot-seat
And home conveyed me, weeping bitterly.

“Then many foemen brandished round my head
The ashen spearshaft, fain to strike me dead ;
For their wrath burned against me sore : but he
Kept them from off me ; for he held in dread

“The wrath of Zeus in whose protection stand
The stranger and the suppliant, and whose hand
Is heaviest upon them that do ill deeds.
Seven years’ space abode I in the land ;

THE ODYSSEY

“ And there great wealth I gathered up to me
From the Egyptians ; for their hands were free.
But when the eighth year came, a treacherous
Phoenician scoundrel came from oversea ;

“ One who brought many men to evil case :
With wiles he lured me to his dwelling-place
Phoenice, where his house and riches lay,
And there I lodged with him a full year’s space.

“ But when at last the months and days drew near
To their fulfilment, as the circling year
Turned on itself and brought the seasons back,
He took me in his company to steer,

“ In a sea-going ship with cargo stored
For Libya, telling me a lying word,
But in his heart he thought to sell me there
For a great price : with him I went aboard,

“ Foreboding ill, but helpless. In mid-sea
The ship ran out with Crete upon the lee
Before a fair strong-blowing northern wind :
But Zeus devised that thence their doom should be.

“ For after we dropped Crete and no more land
Was seen, but sky and sea on every hand,
The son of Cronus made a dark-blue cloud
Over the carven ship in heaven to stand,

BOOK FOURTEENTH

“Blackening the deep; and out of heaven there came
A crash of thunder and a sheet of flame
At once, and smitten by the bolt of God
She reeled from stem to stern through all her frame,

“And filled with sulphurous vapour, and therefrom
The crew fell off and on the billowing foam
Round the black hull awhile like cormorants
Went drifting, and God stayed their journey home.

“But to my hands, as there I lay forlorn,
The mainmast from the blue-prowed ship upturn
God brought, that yet I might escape ; and I,
Clasping it, by the bitter winds was borne.

“Nine days on end before the wind I drave
And on the tenth black night a mighty wave
Rolled me ashore on the Thesprotian coast,
Where the prince Pheidon shelter to me gave,

“The king Thesprotian : there my life I won
And paid no ransom for it : for his son
Came on me where beneath the open sky
Freezing I lay with weariness fordone ;

“And raised me by the hand a helpless thing,
And led me to the palace of the king
His father, and about my body did
A shirt and cloak to be my covering.

THE ODYSSEY

“There of Odysseus I heard news : for he
In friendly wise, he said, and hospitably
Had entertained him as to his own land
He took his journey ; and he shewed to me

“The wealth Odysseus to that house had brought
In gold and bronze and iron hammer-wrought,
Such as ten generations well might pass
From sire to son before it wore to naught.

“But to Dodona he had travelled then
To hear the oracles Zeus gives to men
From the high-foliaged oak, and learn how he
To Ithaca’s rich land might come again,

“Whether in open wise or secretly,
Being long absent : and an oath to me
He sware, as in his house he poured the wine,
That then a ship lay launched for him at sea,

“With her crew ready, to convey him home.
But I left earlier, nor saw him come.
For a Thesprotian ship was setting sail
For the isle rich in wheat, Dulichium.

“So to her crew he handed me to bring
To king Acastus : but an evil thing
They chose to plan against me in their heart,
To bring to pass my woe’s accomplishing.

BOOK FOURTEENTH

“ So when the ship seafaring far from land
Stood out, the day of slavery they planned
To bring about me, and from off my back
The cloak and shirt they tore with violent hand,

“ And in a tattered shirt and garment old
And filthy, that which now your eyes behold,
They clad me ; and to far-seen Ithaca
They came when evening fell on farm and fold.

“ Then down on the ship’s thwart they fastened me
With a well-twisted rope immoveably,
And disembarking thence their supper took
In haste beside the margent of the sea.

“ But lightly the Gods’ hands my bonds undid ;
And with my head in my torn garment hid
Along the galley’s polished lading-plank
Into the sea upon my breast I slid.

“ Then swimming with both hands I cleft the flood
Till between them and me a great space stood ;
And then I got ashore and crouching lay
Within a thicket of the blossomed wood.

“ And they with curses up and down amain
Went ranging, till when now they deemed it vain
Further to search, into the hollow ship
They got them up and sailed away again.

THE ODYSSEY

“ But me the Gods, who easily can give
Their succour, hid and brought a fugitive
To this the steading of a prudent man :
For yet belike I am ordained to live.”

And answering spake you, herder of the swine,
Eumaeus : “ O unhappy guest of mine,
Much have you moved me by this tale of fate
That drove you forth to wander and to pine.

“ But in one thing I trow you do not well
Nor will persuade my mind by this you tell
Touching Odysseus : why should one like you
Tell idle falsehoods ? what return befell

“ My lord I know, who naught but hatred found
At the Gods’ hands, when they on Trojan ground
Wrought not his death, or in the hands of friends
Thereafter, when the skein of war was wound.

“ For then his tomb the whole Achaean host
Had reared, and he a mighty name to boast
Left to his son, who now is cast away
Caught by the whirlwinds on a nameless coast.

“ But I beside my swine a sojourner
Abide, nor ever to the town I stir
Except when thither sage Penelope
Bids me, if any tidings come to her.

BOOK FOURTEENTH

“Then some make further question, sitting by,
Both they who for my lord’s long absence sigh
And they whom it rejoices, since they eat
His food and pay no price for it : but I

“Have no more heart to question or to scan
The tales they tell, since an Aetolian
Deceived me with a story, one who roamed
Abroad in exile, having slain a man.

“So he to this my steading turned his feet,
And welcome good I gave him : and in Crete
He said that with Idomeneus he saw
My lord refitting his storm-battered fleet :

“And that by summer or by autumn he
With all his godlike fellows oversea
Laden with wealth would come ; and you, old man
Of sorrows, whom a God has led to me,

“Seek not with flattering speech or tale untrue
To win me ; not for that I reckon due
Regard and favour, but in fear of Zeus
The guest’s Protector, and in ruth for you.”

And answering spake Odysseus subtle-souled :
“Surely within your breast a heart you hold
Proof to persuasion, and the oath I swear
Has left you unbelieving as of old.

THE ODYSSEY

“ Now let us make a covenant and swear,
And to the oath the Gods shall witness bear
Who hold Olympus : if your lord return,
You shall provide me shirt and cloak to wear,

“ And give me passage to Dulichium,
Where I would be : but if he do not come,
Let your thralls cast me down the cliff, that lips
Of beggars henceforth may from lies be dumb.”

And the bright swineherd spake and made reply :
“ Yea, thus great fame and honour win would I
Among mankind both now and afterward
Slaying you then, and causing one to die

“ Whom to my house I had brought in with me
And given him guesting : from the heart would be
My prayer to Zeus the son of Cronus then !
But now is time for supper ; presently

“ My fellows will be in, and then we may
Here a good supper in the hut array.”
So they to one another spake : and nigh
The swineherds and the swine came up the way.

These in the styes they penned, and round about
Rose a huge clamour from the herded rout
Driven to the sleeping-pens : and therewithal
The goodly swineherd to his men cried out :

BOOK FOURTEENTH

“Fetch me a hog now of our goodliest,
That I may slay it for the outland guest ;
And for us too a solace it shall be
For our long labour and our lives distressed

“Herding the white-tusked swine that all unbought
Feed strangers, and our labour goes for naught.”
So saying, with the axe-edge logs he cleft,
While a fat hog of five years old they brought

Where on the hearth the swineherd stood ; and he
The Gods forgot not in his piety,
But cutting bristles from the white-tusked head
Into the fire he cast them reverently

With prayer addressed to all the Gods that they
Should compass wise Odysseus' homeward way ;
And lifting up an oaken billet left
From cutting, smote it down, that dead it lay.

Then the rest fell to work and cut its throat
And singed it and in pieces quickly smote ;
But from each joint the swineherd cut raw bits
And wrapped them up in fat as in a coat.

Then this he threw, to make burnt-offering fit,
With flour of barley sprinkled over it,
Into the fire ; and all the residue
They cut up small and stuck it on the spit,

THE ODYSSEY

And broiled it well ; and off the spits they drew
The meat, and all of it on trenchers threw.
And up the swineherd rose to carve the meat,
For equal dealings in his mind he knew.

In seven parts he dealt it share by share ;
And one of these he set apart with prayer
For Hermes, son of Maia, and the nymphs,
And portioned out the rest to each man there.

But for Odysseus from the white-tusked swine
He cut long slices all adown the chine
In special honour ; and his master's heart
Waxed high within him at the favouring sign.

And subtle-souled Odysseus hailed him so :
“ Eumaeus, may our father Zeus bestow
His love on you as I do, since to me
Honour you render though my state be low.”

And answering spake you, herder of the swine,
Eumaeus : “ Eat, O luckless guest of mine,
And let your heart be gladdened with this fare.
God, as the heart within him shall incline,

“ This thing or that will give or will withhold ;
For by his power is all the world controlled.”
So spake he, while first-offering to the Gods
He made that are for ever from of old.

BOOK FOURTEENTH

And flame-bright wine the sacrifice to crown
He poured, and to the Stormer of the town,
Odysseus, dealt it, as he sat beside
His share ; and bread upon the board set down

Mesaulius, whom the swineherd left alone,
Far from his mistress, when his lord was gone,
And far from old Laertes, for a price
From Taphians bought with cattle of his own.

So to the ready food before them spread
They reached their hands ; and after they had fed
Hunger and thirst to quench, Mesaulius cleared
The food away ; and filled with flesh and bread

They turned to rest. Now night upon them set
Stormy, with clouds across the moon that met,
And all night long poured down the rain, and blew
The strong west wind that ever brings the wet.

And to the swineherd then Odysseus spoke,
Trying if haply he would strip his cloak
To lend him, since he cared for him so well,
Or move thereto some other of his folk :

“ Eumaeus, you and all your fellows now
Hearken to me while something I avow,
Urged on by witless wine, that drives a man
To what his wisdom oft would disallow ;

THE ODYSSEY

“ To sing and to laugh loosely and to dance,
And many a word to utter that perchance
Were better left unsaid : but since my word
Is launched, I will allow it utterance.

“ Would I were young and my old force unspent,
As once when under Troy an ambushment
We fashioned, and Odysseus in command
With Menelaus son of Atreus went.

“ And with these captains twain the third was I
At their own instance. Now when we drew nigh
The sheer wall of the city, round the town
Into a thicket we crept close to lie ;

“ Among the swamps and reedbeds crouching low
Under our arms : and night came on to blow
Foul, with an icy wind out of the North,
And all the air was thick with frozen snow.

“ And on our armour icicles congealed.
Then all the others in the open field
Slept comfortably, clad in shirt and cloak,
And to his shoulders each drew close his shield.

“ But I, who deemed not that the cold would hurt
So sore, had gone forth with them in my shirt
Leaving my cloak behind among my men,
With my bare shield and shining girdle girt.

BOOK FOURTEENTH

“ Now when the third part of the night was gone
And the stars drew to westward, I thereon
Odysseus with my elbow, as he lay
Beside me, touched, and he lent ear anon.

“ And thus I whispered : O Laertes’ son,
High-born Odysseus, subtle-hearted one,
No more among the living shall I be,
But by the wintry tempest am undone.

“ A cloak I have not, for by heaven made blind
Stripped to the shirt I started, and I find
This cold beyond endurance. So said I ;
And straightway then a counsel in his mind

“ He found : such ever was he wont to be
In council as in battle. Then spake he
And in a low voice answering me said :
Keep silence now ; let no man saving me

“ Among the Achaeans hear you. Thus he said,
And on his elbow lifting up his head
He spake aloud : Listen, O friends ; a dream
Has come to me from heaven upon my bed :

“ Far from the ships we lie ; now who will run
With word to Agamemnon Atreus’ son,
The shepherd of the people, bidding him
Send reinforcement, lest we be fordone ?

THE ODYSSEY

“He spake, and swiftly to the ships a man,
Thoas, Andraemon’s son, arose and ran,
Casting his crimson cloak away from him ;
And so till golden-throned Dawn began

“I lay beneath his covering, well content.
Would I were young now and my strength unspent !
For in this cottage then assuredly
One of the swineherds would his cloak have lent ;

“And such kind service and regard were mine
As good men get : but now they let me pine
Because I wear mean rags.” Then answering him
Spake you, Eumaeus, herder of the swine :

“No fault is in the story you have told,
O aged man, and not ill-timed I hold
The word you say, nor idle : therefore now
Raiment you shall not lack against the cold,

“Nor aught of what distressful men should claim
From one to whom in suppliant wise they came,
As for this night : but with the dawn of day
In your own rags you needs must play the game ;

“Since here we have not many cloaks to spare
Or change of shirts, but one for each man’s share.
But when Odysseus’ son comes home again,
Himself shall give you cloak and shirt to wear,

BOOK FOURTEENTH

“And wheresoever you would fain be gone
Shall send you forth.” So said he, and anon
Got up and laid for him beside the fire
A bed with sheep and goat-skins piled thereon.

So there Odysseus laid him down anew ;
And over him a cloak the swineherd threw
Large and close-woven, that he kept by him
For change of raiment when the storm-wind blew.

So there Odysseus took his rest, while near
By him the young men slept ; but little cheer
The swineherd had far off his swine to lie,
And going forth he clad him in his gear ;

(But in his heart Odysseus then was glad
That for his absent lord such care he had)
And first about his shoulders the sharp sword
He slung, and in a cloak his body clad,

That kept the wind from off him, nowise thin,
And over all a great and goodly skin
Stripped from a shaggy goat ; and in his hand
He took a good sharp-pointed javelin,

Both dogs and men aloof from him that kept ;
And going forth he laid him down where slept
The white-tusked swine beneath a hollow rock
Sheltered, while overhead the north wind swept.

BOOK FIFTEENTH

HOW TELEMACHUS CAME TO EUMAEUS

MEANWHILE to Lacedaemon's level mead
Pallas Athena was gone forth, in heed
To put high-souled Odysseus' glorious son
In mind of going, and to bid him speed.

And in the forecourt of the prince renowned,
Lord Menelaus, laid to sleep she found
Telemachus and Nestor's splendid son :
Fast in soft sleep the son of Nestor bound ;

But slumber sweet Telemachus to take
Prevailed not, through the deathless night awake
By anxious thought about his father kept :
Then standing nigh grey-eyed Athena spake :

“Telemachus, it is not well that so
From your own dwelling far astray you go,
Leaving your substance, and within your house
Men so outrageous, lest they overthrow

BOOK FIFTEENTH

“ Your state and part your heritage by lot,
And from this journey naught of good be got.
Up straightway, and to Menelaus pray,
The good war-crier, that he keep you not.

“ So may you find your mother clean from sin
At home : for now her father and her kin
Urge her to wed Eurymachus ; for he
Outbids the rest, and gift on gift sends in.

“ Take heed now therefore lest against your will
She bear away your substance, knowing still
What kind of heart is in a woman’s breast,
That ever she is fain his house to fill

“ Who weds her ; and the children whom she bore
And him who was her wedded lord before,
From her remembrance, after he is dead,
She blots, nor asks about them any more.

“ Now go, and to the charge of her commit
Whom of the women-thralls you deem most fit
All your estate, until the Gods bestow
A good wife of your own to care for it.

“ This also in your mind I bid you keep :
The suitors’ princeliest now with purpose deep
Lay ambush for you in the strait that parts
Ithaca off from Samos’ craggy steep ;

THE ODYSSEY

“Desiring sore to slay you ere you see
Your country : yet I deem not that shall be.
Sooner the earth shall cover some of these,
The wooers who devour your property.

“Then out beyond the islands keep away
Your well-wrought ship, and sail both night and day;
And after you a favouring wind shall send
Whatso Immortal is your guard and stay.

“But when you reach the isle’s first point, do you
Send on to town the ship and all her crew ;
While you yourself first to the swineherd go,
Who keeps the swine, and loyal is and true.

“There sleep the night ; and bid him go that he
Within the town to wise Penelope
Tidings may tell, that you are come to her
Safe, and returned from Pylos prosperously.”

So saying, to Olympus far-outspread
She went her way : but he upon his bed
Awoke the son of Nestor from sweet sleep,
Touching him with his heel, and spake and said :

“Awake, O Nestor’s son Pisistratus !
Bring up and yoke beneath the car for us
The strong-hoofed steeds, that we may take the road.”
Then spake the son of Nestor answering thus :

BOOK FIFTEENTH

“Telemachus, it may in nowise be,
How fain soever of the road are we,
That we may drive amid the dusky night.
Morning will soon be come : wait patiently,

“Until the son of Atreus shall appear,
Prince Menelaus, famous with the spear,
Bearing you gifts, and lay them on the car,
And send us forth with words of kindly cheer.

“A memory for all the days to hold
Unto the guest the host is, who of old
Kindness has shewn.” So spake he, and at once
Morning arose upon her throne of gold.

And Menelaus of the battle-cry
Rose from the bed where he was wont to lie
By fair-tressed Helen : but Odysseus' son,
When he took note and saw him drawing nigh

Made haste about his body to bestow
The broidered shirt, and the great cloak to throw
Over his mighty shoulders, and went forth
And stood beside him and bespake him so :

“O high-born Menelaus, Atreus' son,
Prince of the people, let me now be gone
To mine own native land ; for I would fain
Go thither, and my heart is set thereon.”

THE ODYSSEY

And the good war-crier Menelaus thus
Spake and made answer : “ O Telemachus,
For no long time will I detain you here,
Since to return you are solicitous.

“ Indeed all those a guest who entertain
I blame, if love or hate they overstrain.
Reason is best in all things ; and alike
Evil it is, if him who would remain

“ You press to go, or to the road addressed
Hinder from going : since this rule the best
For hospitable usage is, that men
Cherish the staying, speed the leaving guest.

“ Yet wait until upon your car I lay
Gifts fair to see, that look on them you may,
And bid the women from our ample store
Within the palace dinner to array.

“ A double good it is—good fame it lends
And honour, and to profit likewise tends—
That having dined the traveller set forth
On a long journey far to the world’s ends.

“ But if you wish to travel to and fro
Through Hellas and mid-Argos, I will go
Myself beside you, harnessing my steeds,
And cities of mankind to you will shew.

BOOK FIFTEENTH

“ And none shall send us forth with empty hand ;
But you shall get one gift in every land,
Two mules, or a gold cup, or some device
Wrought in fine bronze, a caldron or a stand.”

Then answering wise Telemachus begun :
“ O high-born Menelaus, Atreus’ son,
Prince of the people, I desire to go
To mine own country : for at parting none

“ As guardian of my goods I left behind :
Thus, while I seek my godlike sire to find,
Fear lest myself be lost, or some of those
Rich treasures in my house, disturbs my mind.”

That when the war-crier Menelaus heard,
Immediately he to his wife gave word
Dinner to lay from the good store within,
With the thrall-maids to her that ministered.

Then up came Eteoneus presently,
Son of the Helper, newly risen : for he
Dwelt nigh ; and Menelaus bade him light
A fire whereat the flesh might roasted be.

But while the squire to obey him was intent,
Himself into a chamber filled with scent
Descended, not alone ; for by his side
Helen and Megapenthes also went.

THE ODYSSEY

And passing where his treasure was laid up
The son of Atreus took a twy-rimmed cup,
And ordered Megapenthes to bear forth
A silver bowl for mixing when men sup.

But Helen sought where ranged in ark and chest
Were kept the gowns with rich embroidery dressed
That she herself had wrought ; and one of these
The bright of women took, the goodliest

And fairest-broidered : like a star it shone
Under the rest ; and through the house passed on
The twain, till to Telemachus they came,
And fair-haired Menelaus spake anon :

“ Telemachus, I pray that Zeus most high,
Husband of Hera, Thunderer from the sky,
Fulfil your journey as you purpose it ;
And of the treasures in my house that lie

“ My gift shall be what costliest I hold
And fairest, this bowl wrought upon a mould,
The handwork of Hephaestus, wholly made
Of silver, and the lips are rimmed with gold :

“ Which princely Phaedimus, who wore the crown
Of the Sidonian people, when his town
And palace on my wanderings sheltered me,
Gave me ; and I to you will hand it down.”

BOOK FIFTEENTH

Thus as he spake, the cup with double rim
The prince, the son of Atreus, handed him :
And the bright silver bowl brought forth and set
Before him Megapenthes strong of limb.

But fair-cheeked Helen held the gown outspread
Beside him, and thus uttered speech and said :
“ Dear child, this gift I also give to you,
That Helen’s hands may be remembered.

“ Let your wife wear it on her wedding morn,
And until then your mother’s care unworn
Keep it. Fare well, until you reach your house
Well-builed, and the land where you were born.”

Into his hands she gave it saying thus ;
And glad he took it : then Pisistratus
The prince took up the gifts, and in the car
Bestowed them all and deemed them marvellous.

Then Menelaus of the yellow hair
Leading them in, they sat on bench and chair :
And a maid brought, in a rich ewer of gold,
And poured into a silver basin there,

Water for washing, and beside them spread
A polished table, whereon wheaten bread
With many dainties the grave housekeeper
Laid from her store-room that they might be fed.

THE ODYSSEY

And by them carved the meat the Helper's son,
And dealt the portions ; and when that was done,
The son of Menelaus glorious
Filled up with wine the cup of every one.

So to the ready food before them spread
They reached their hands : and after they had fed
Hunger and thirst to quench, Telemachus
And Nestor's son the horses harnessed,

And clomb upon the painted car ; and so
Out of the forecourt and the portico
Loud-echoing drove they forth ; and after them
Made fair-haired Menelaus haste to go :

Holding in his right hand for them to take,
That ere they went drink-offering they might make,
Sweet wine within a golden cup, and stood
Before the steeds and reached it out and spake :

“ Fare you well both, my lads : my greeting be
To Nestor, shepherd of the folk ; for he,
While we the sons of the Achaeans warred
In Troy, was like a father kind to me.”

And sage Telemachus returned reply :
“ To him assuredly, O prince most high,
When thither we arrive, all these your words
We will repeat ; and would to God that I

BOOK FIFTEENTH

“Returning, found Odysseus in our land
Of Ithaca, that he might understand
How bearing many precious gifts I go
Hence, having found all kindness at your hand.”

Now while he spake, upon his right flew by
An eagle in his talons bearing high
A tame goose from the farmyard, white and huge,
With men and women after him in cry.

He passing close in front from left to right
Before the chariot-horses winged his flight.
And they rejoiced beholding, and the heart
In every one grew warmer for delight.

Then first to high-born Menelaus thus
Broke silence Nestor's son Pisistratus :
“Prince of the people, say if God have shewn
To your own self this omen, or to us.”

Thus made he question : and the valiant man,
Prince Menelaus, pondered how to plan
Fit answer and interpret it aright :
But long-gowned Helen ere he spake began :

“Listen to me, while I divine and say
What to my mind the Deathless Ones convey
Of doom's fulfilment : as this bird, his brood
And mountain-eyry leaving, snatched away

THE ODYSSEY

“The goose that in the house was bred, so he
From many wanderings and much misery
Shall come, and vengeance on the suitors take ;
Or now is there and plans their doom to be.”

And sage Telemachus returned reply :
“So may Zeus grant, the Thunderer from on high,
Husband of Hera : then in that far land,
As to a God, to you give thanks would I.”

He spake, and lashed the steeds, and swiftly they
Sped through the city to the plain. All day
Across their necks the rattling yoke they swung,
Till the sun dipped and all the paths were grey.

To Diocles at Pherae came they thus,
The prince, whose father was Ortilochus
Son of Alpheus ; there that night the twain
Slept, and he gave them welcome courteous.

But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
They yoked, and clomb the painted car upon ;
And from the forecourt and the echoing porch
Beneath the lash the willing steeds flew on,

To the high hold of Pylos making speed.
Then spoke Telemachus to Nestor's seed :
“O son of Nestor, in what wise might you
Promise me this and make your word a deed ?

BOOK FIFTEENTH

“ Friends we may vouch ourselves by heritage
From friendship of our fathers, and our age
Is equal, and this journey we have gone
The bond of concord shall yet more engage.

“ Leave me then here, O prince, nor drive me on
Beyond my ship ; lest he, the ancient one,
Out of mere kindness keep me in his house
Unwilling ; for I must in haste be gone.”

So spake he : and debating in his mind
The son of Nestor pondered how to find
Fulfilment of his promise as was fit ;
And to this counsel then his heart inclined.

To the swift ship and margent of the bay
Turning the steeds, he took and laid away
The goodly gifts that Menelaus gave
In the ship’s stern, the gold and the array.

And thus to him in winged words said he,
Advising : “ Now embark and put to sea
In haste with all your fellows, ere the house
I reach ; for this I know assuredly,

“ Such mastery and pride his heart fulfil,
He will not let you go, but come he will
Himself to bid you, nor go empty back
I think, and be right angry with you still.”

THE ODYSSEY

So saying, the fair-tressed steeds he drove again
Back to the Pylian town, and quickly then
Came to the palace ; but Telemachus
With urgent speech gave order to his men :

“ In the black ship, O friends, her gear bestow,
And get we in that we may haste to go.”
So said he, and they hearkened and obeyed,
And entered in and took their seats arow.

Thus while he wrought, and sacrifice and prayer
By the ship's stern made to Athena there,
An outlander drew nigh him, who had slain
A man, and out of Argos forth must fare

To banishment : a soothsayer was he,
And from Melampus drew his ancestry,
Who in a great house in the Pylian land,
Mother of sheep, of old dwelt prosperously ;

And then an exile passed to a strange land,
Availing not proud Neleus to withstand,
The haughtiest of men living ; who a year
Kept much wealth back from him by strength of hand.

Then in the house of Phylacus the king
He lay awhile, where many a grievous thing
He suffered, and in fetters hard was bound
Because of Neleus' daughter's ravishing,

BOOK FIFTEENTH

And the sore trouble by the Goddess wrought,
The Vengeance that men's houses brings to naught.
Yet doom escaped he, and to Phylace
From Pylos the deep-lowling oxen brought ;

And took repayment for the evil deed
That Neleus did, and for his brother's need
Won him a wife, but went to a strange land
Himself, to Argos pasturer of the steed.

For there it was predestined he should be,
And hold among the Argives sovrantry.
So there a wife he took to him, and built
A high-roofed house, and two strong sons had he,

Antiphates and Mantius. And of these
Antiphates begat proud Oicles,
But Oicles the rouser of the host
Amphiaraus ; to whom kindnesses

Unending Zeus the Thunderbearer still
Dealt, and Apollo : howbeit to the sill
Of old age he attained not, but in 'Thebes
Died for the gifts that lured a woman's will.

Now he Alcmaon and Amphilochus
Begot ; but sons were born to Mantius,
Clitus and Polyphides ; afterward,
Of Clitus' beauty waxing amorous,

THE ODYSSEY

The gold-throned Dawn reft him away that he
Among the Deathless People one should be.
But to high-hearted Polyphoides gave
Apollo excellence in prophecy

Beyond all men since Amphiaros died ;
And he in Hyperesia to abide
In wrath against his father went, and there
Dwelt and to all men mortal prophesied.

Now he, anigh Telemachos who came,
His son was, Theoklymenos by name.
He came upon him while drink-offering
And prayer he made beside the black ship's frame ;

And thus in winged words began to say :
" O friend, for here I see that vows you pay,
Now I beseech you by the sacrifice
You make, and by the God to whom you pray,

" And by your own head, and these men your crew,
Answer this question that I ask you true,
Naught hiding : who and whence are you of men ?
Where is your land and they who nurtured you ?"

And sage Telemachos returned reply :
" This will I tell you truly and not lie,
O stranger : out of Ithaca my race
Springs, and Odysseus for my sire have I ;

BOOK FIFTEENTH

“Or had—for ere now is he surely dead
Most miserably ; therefore was I led,
Taking a black ship and a crew, to seek
For tidings of my sire long vanished.”

And godlike Theoclymenus began
In answer : “ I too am a homeless man.
For one of mine own countrymen I slew,
And many are his brothers and his clan

“Upon horse-pasturing Argos, and are great
Among the Achaeans ; wherefore now, my fate
And the black weird avoiding at their hands,
I flee, being belike predestinate

“Among mankind to wander. Of your grace
Take me aboard, since in an exile’s case
I supplicate you, that they slay me not :
For well I deem they hold me close in chase.”

And sage Telemachus returned reply :
“Surely I will not your desire deny,
Nor from the good ship thrust you. Come ; and there
All you shall have our household can supply.”

So said he, and the bronze-topped spear thereat
He took and on the deck-planks laid it flat.
Then up into the ship he got, that swayed
For her sea-journey, and astern he sat ;

THE ODYSSEY

While by him Theoclymenus he bid
Be seated ; and the hawsers off they slid ;
And cheerly bade Telemachus his crew
Handle the gear : and that in haste they did.

Within the socket-hole the pinewood mast
They reared, and with the forestays made it fast,
And by the twisted halyards of ox-hide
The white sails hoisted ; and a favouring blast

Behind the ship grey-eyed Athena sent,
Fresh-blowing, dancing through the firmament ;
That swiftly she her voyage might fulfil
Across the salt sea-water as she went.

Past Fountains and the lovely streams that flow
Through Chalcis went they ; and the sun drew low
And all the ways were shadowed, when she made
Phea before the wind God sent to blow :

And past bright Elis, the Epeans' land ;
Thence through the fleeting isles he made her stand
Out seaward, doubting whether he might yet
Escape his death, or fall into their hand.

Meanwhile the twain that at the hut had met,
Odysseus and the swineherd bright, were set
To sup, and by them supped the other men ;
But when they now were minded to forget

BOOK FIFTEENTH

Desire of meat and drink, Odysseus spake,
Proving the swineherd, if he still would make
Him welcome at the farm and bid him stay,
Or move him to the town his road to take :

“Hear now, Eumaeus and the rest ; my way
Lies to the town meseems with dawn of day
To beg my living, lest abiding here
A burden upon all of you I lay.

“Give me good counsel, and a trusty guide
Lend me to lead me thither at his side ;
And in the town I must go to and fro
To any who will bit and sup provide :

“Whether the house to enter where your king
Divine Odysseus dwelt, therein to bring
My tidings to sage-souled Penelope,
Or with the wooers overmastering

“To mingle, if they gave me daily food,
Having themselves no end of all things good ;
For readily to serve them I could turn
My hand to any labour that they would.

“I tell you—hearken and attend to me—
To fleetfoot Hermes be the praise, for he
Gives grace and glory to the works of men :
No man may match me, whosoe’er he be,

THE ODYSSEY

“ At household work, whether dry logs to split,
Or deftly lay the fire and kindle it,
Or as a sewer or cook or cupbearer,
Lords’ service, such as for mean men is fit.”

Then you, Eumaeus, herder of the swine,
In great vexation spake : “ O guest of mine,
Was this your inward purpose ? utterly
To perish on the spot is your design,

“ If you would enter in among the throng
Of suitors who with violence and wrong
Fill up the iron vault of heaven ; to them
Not such as you for servitors belong.

“ Young men arrayed in dainty fresh attire,
Fair-faced, sleek-headed, ever they require
To serve them, where the polished board is heaped
With bread and flesh and wine to their desire.

“ Therefore abide where by your presence none
Is troubled, neither I nor any one
Of these my fellows here that live with me ;
But when my lord returns, Odysseus’ son,

“ Himself shall cloak and shirt on you bestow,
And send you whither you desire to go,”
Then answering, toilworn bright Odysseus spake :
“ May Zeus our lord, Eumaeus, love you so

BOOK FIFTEENTH

“ As I do, seeing you have given relief
To one unsheltered and oppressed by grief.
Most wretched is the wandering life to men
For many miseries, and this in chief,

“ Fierce hunger, that to many ills can bring
Men set in woe and pain and wandering.
Now since you keep me, bidding me abide
His coming, tell me of the queen and king

“ Odysseus’ father, whom to eld drawn nigh
He left at parting : underneath the sky
Are they alive yet, or already dead
And gone to the Dark House where dead men lie ? ”

To him the master swineherd answered : “ Yea,
The very truth, O stranger, I will say.
Laertes lives indeed, but ever prays
God from his limbs to let the life decay.

“ Since for his lost son deeply sorrows he,
And for his prudent wedded wife ; for she
It was who most of all by her decease
Fretted his heart and aged him suddenly.

“ But she through mourning for her glorious son
Died by a lamentable death, that none,
I pray, may die who dwelling in this land
Is dear to me, or kindnesses has done.

THE ODYSSEY

“For while she lived, although her grief were sore,
I sought and asked about her evermore.
For I was nursed along with Clymene,
The long-gowned mighty maiden whom she bore

“The youngest of her children ; I and she
Grew up together ; and she cared for me
Scarce less than her own child. But after both
Grown to the goodly flower of age were we,

“To Same as a bride for payment meet
They gave her ; but in brave attire complete
Her mother clad me, and sent forth afield
With shirt and cloak, and shoes upon my feet :

“And well she loved me : now all that is gone.
Yet to the farm that I abide upon
The blessed Gods give increase, for my meat
And drink, and for the stranger’s benison.

“But from my mistress I can get no more
A word or deed of kindness as before,
Since on the house this plague of violent men
Has settled down : for servants long full sore

“Before their mistress’ face their tale to bring,
And ask of her concerning everything,
And eat and drink and carry back afield
Somewhat that keeps their heart from sorrowing.”

BOOK FIFTEENTH

Then answering spake Odysseus subtle-souled
And said : “ Ay me, I trow you were not old,
Swineherd Eumaeus, when from home and kin
You fared afar on wanderings manifold.

“ Now say this further and exactly tell,
Whether before a storm of foemen fell
The wide-wayed town of men, wherein the queen
Your mother and your father used to dwell :

“ Or while you kept the oxen or the sheep
Alone, did foemen from across the deep
On shipboard hale you, and to this man’s house
Sell you a slave, who did not buy you cheap ? ”

Then spake the master herdsman of the swine :
“ Since of this thing you ask me, guest of mine,
And question, now keep silence and attend
While sitting here at ease you drink your wine.

“ These nights of ours are endless ; time they bring
For sleep, and for delight in listening.
Nor need you very early go to rest :
Much sleep is also a vexatious thing.

“ But of the rest if one be minded so
Let him go forth now and himself bestow
To slumber, and at day-dawn break his fast
And with our master’s swine to pasture go :

THE ODYSSEY

While in the hut we two alone remain,
Eating and drinking, and some solace gain
As each unto the other we recall
The lamentable tale of all our pain.

“For even in sorrow afterward may he
Take pleasure, who has borne much misery
And far has wandered : so I now will tell
The tale whereof you ask and question me.

“A certain isle there is whereof the fame
Has haply reached you : Syria is its name,
Beyond Ortygia, where the sun turns back.
Not very thickly peopled is the same ;

“But a good land, with oxen and with sheep
Well stored, and laden vines and cornfields deep :
And hunger never comes upon the folk,
Nor sore diseases that make mortals weep.

“But to the tribes of men when old they grow
Therein, the Archer of the silver bow,
Apollo, comes with Artemis, and thus
With shafts that hurt not strikes and lays them low.

“There are two cities, and the land by lot
Parted between them ; but in both had got
The lordship Ctesius son of Ormenus,
My father, like the Gods that perish not.

BOOK FIFTEENTH

“ Now thither came Phoenician sailors bold,
Gain-snatchers, carrying in their black ship's hold
Trifles past counting. In my father's house
Dwelt a Phoenician woman time of old,

“ Well skilled in handicraft, and tall and fair :
Her the Phoenicians in a crafty snare
Enticed to folly. One of them at first
By the ship's hold, as she was washing there,

“ Lay with her—for the love that knows not shame
Beguiles the heart within a woman's frame,
Though she have done no evil heretofore—
Then asked he who she was and whence she came.

“ And to my father's high-roofed palace she
Pointed, and answered straight : I vouch to be
Of Sidon rich in bronze, where Arybas,
A man of mighty wealth, gave life to me.

“ But Taphian pirates as afield I strayed
Snatched me away returning, and conveyed
Hither, and sold me into this man's house ;
Yea, and no little price for me he paid.

“ Then answered he who privily had lain
With her and said : Now were you not right fain
To come with us and see that high-roofed house,
Your home, and them that bare you, once again ?

THE ODYSSEY

“For yet they live, and as men deem, in bliss.
Then answering said the woman : Even this,
Sailors, might be, if you will swear an oath
To take me home and do me naught amiss.

“So said she, and they sware it every one
Even as she bade them : but when that was done,
And the oath made perfect, then the woman spake
Once more to him, and thus her speech begun :

“Now all of you in silence keep this thing.
Let no man, on the road or at the spring
Who meets me henceforth, say a word to me,
Lest to the old lord one should tidings bring ;

“And he, suspecting, in a grievous chain
Should bind me, and for you devise your bane.
But hold the word within you, and make haste
By purchase your ship’s homeward freight to gain.

“But when the ship is ready to be gone,
Full-laden, let a message come anon
To me within the house : for I will bring
Gold likewise, all I can lay hand upon ;

“And willingly I yet another fee
Will give you for my passage oversea.
For a lord’s child I nurse within the house,
A little boy who out of doors with me

BOOK FIFTEENTH

“ Comes running and begins to understand :
Him will I bring on shipboard in my hand ;
And he shall fetch you a great price, where'er
You sell him in an alien-speaking land.

“ So saying, to the goodly house anon
She turned : and they, until the year was gone,
Abiding by us in the carven ship
Bought store of merchandise for freight thereon.

“ But when their galley's hold was laden well
To go, they sent a messenger to tell
The woman. To my father's palace came
A cunning man who bare with him to sell

“ A gold chain strung with amber beads between ;
And that in hall the handmaids and the queen
My mother handled, and regarded it,
Bidding a price : but he a nod unseen

“ Silently gave, and to the ship's hold then,
The signal given her, went his way again.
So by the hand she led me out of doors,
And found the tables of the feasting men,

“ The vassals of my father, ranged arow,
The cups yet on them, in the portico,
Whence they were newly risen, to the seats
And place of speech among the folk to go.

THE ODYSSEY

“Thence she caught up two cups, and in her dress
Hid them, I following in my childishness :
And the sun set and all the ways were dim
While swiftly to the haven’s famed recess

“We came, where the Phoenician cruiser rode ;
And they upon the pathways of the flood
Taking us both aboard, embarked and sailed,
While fair behind them blew the wind of God.

“A six days’ space both day and night we sped :
But when the seventh morning’s light was spread
By Zeus the son of Cronus, Artemis
The Arrow-showerer smote the woman dead :

“And down into the ship’s hold plunging she
Fell as a seagull dives : and in the sea
They cast her for a prey to fish and seal :
But I was left alone, and woe was me.

“But them the wind and tide bore nigh the strand
Of Ithaca, where to Laertes’ hand
For a great price I fell : and thus it was
That my eyes came to look upon this land.”

Thereat high-born Odysseus spake once more
And answered : “Truly you have stirred me sore
At heart, Eumaeus, by the tale you tell
Of sorrows you have suffered heretofore.

BOOK FIFTEENTH

“Yet surely Zeus has mingled in your lot
Good with the evil, since you thus have got
After these toils and troubles to the house
Of a kind master who disturbs you not :

“One who is careful meat and drink to give,
So that a comfortable life you live ;
But I through many cities of mankind
Wandering, am come here a fugitive.”

In talk between them thus the night they wore,
And slept but for a little while, no more :
For fair-throned Dawn arose apace ; and now
Telemachus' companions nigh the shore

Dropped sail, and quickly lowered the mast away,
And rowing to their moorings in the bay
Cast anchor there and made the hawsers fast ;
And on the sea-marge disembarking they

Made ready dinner, and the wine flame-red
Mingled for drink. But after they had fed
Hunger and thirst to quench, Telemachus
The wise of heart began to speak, and said :

“Now to the city row the black ship on,
You others ; but afield will I be gone
To see my lands and herdsmen, and to town
Descend at evening, these things looked upon.

THE ODYSSEY

“Then a good feast will I at morning make,
Wages to you for this our journey’s sake,
Flesh and wine sweet for drinking.” But thereat
Prince Theoclymenus replied and spake :

“And whither shall I go, dear child, to-day ?
Whose house draw nigh of them who hold in sway
Rough Ithaca ? or to your roof at once
And to your mother shall I take my way ?”

And wise Telemachus made answer so :
“Sure to our own house I would bid you go
If things were otherwise ; for there no lack
There is of cheer on strangers to bestow.

“But poorer welcome to your lot will fall,
I being absent thence ; nor will at all
My mother look on you : for seldom she
Among the suitors shews her face in hall :

“But in an upper chamber seen of none
Weaves at the loom. Howbeit another one
I name to you within whose house you may
Be lodged, Eurymachus, the splendid son

“Of Polybus the wise, to whose renown
The folk, as though a God he were, bow down ;
Being by far their noblest, and most fain
To wed my mother and to wear the crown

BOOK FIFTEENTH

“That was Odysseus’ in the days gone by :
But Zeus, who has his dwelling in the sky,
The Olympian, knows if ere he may attain
That wedding he an evil death shall die.”

Thereat, or ever he had spoken more,
Came flying on his right along the shore
The fleet-winged bird, Apollo’s messenger,
A hawk, that in his talons held and tore

A dove whose feathers rained upon the strand
Between the ship and where the prince took land.
But Theoclymenus from all the rest
Called him apart and caught him by the hand,

And spake to him a word and uttered thus :
“Not without some God’s will, Telemachus,
Flew by this bird on the right hand ; for I,
Looking upon him, knew him ominous.

“Now in all Ithaca a kinglier one
Than you and yours among the folk is none,
And ever shall your house in strength endure.”
But answering wise Telemachus begun :

“Would that this word, O guest, fulfilled might be !
Then soon such friendship you should know from me,
And gifts so great, that whoso met you then
Would give you joy of your felicity.”

THE ODYSSEY

He spake, and to Piraeus turning then,
His faithful fellow, thus he said again :
“ Piraeus son of Clytius, you are wont
To do my bidding most of all the men

“ Who followed me to Pylos : now I pray
Take me this guest, and in your house to-day
Honour and entertainment heedfully
Provide him, till myself return I may.”

Answered Piraeus, master of the spear :
“ Telemachus, though you should tarry here
Long time, the stranger I will entertain,
And he shall have no lack of strangers' cheer.”

So saying, up into the ship got he,
And bade the rest embark and put to sea,
Loosing the hawsers ; and they came aboard .
And sat along the benches orderly.

But meanwhile Prince Telemachus in haste
The fair shoes on his feet below him laced,
And took from off the galley's quarterdeck
His mighty spear, keen-pointed, bronze-encased.

And they the mooring-cables from the strand
Cast off, and pushing out the ship from land
Sailed for the city, as Telemachus,
Son of divine Odysseus, gave command.

BOOK FIFTEENTH

But swiftly forward to the yard he strode
Wherein the swine unnumbered were bestowed,
And all amid them the good swineherd slept,
The man who loyal to his lords abode.

BOOK SIXTEENTH

HOW ODYSSEUS MADE HIMSELF KNOWN TO TELEMACHUS

NOW in the hut, as soon as morning shone,
Odysseus and the swineherd bright anon
Made ready breakfast, having lit the fire ;
And with the swine their herdsmen forth were gone.

And round Telemachus as he drew nigh
The hounds deep-baying came, and gave no cry,
But fawned about him ; and Odysseus bright
Took note, and heard the tramp of feet thereby.

And to Eumaeus then immediately
He turned, and thus a winged word said he :
“ Surely one comes, Eumaeus, who a friend
Or an acquaintance at the least must be :

“ Since the dogs give not tongue, but fawning go
About him, and the tread of feet below
I hear.” Not fully spoken was the word,
When his own son stood in the portico.

BOOK SIXTEENTH

Up then the swineherd starting in surprise
The cups, wherein he mixed in careful wise
The flame-bright wine, let fall, and to the prince
Ran up and kissed his head and lovely eyes,

And both his hands ; and down the big tear fell.
And as a father, who his son loves well,
Embraces him when from a foreign land
In the tenth year he comes at home to dwell ;

His only one and well-beloved, for whom
Much he has wrought in sorrow and in gloom :
So the bright swineherd clasped and kissed the prince
Telemachus as one escaped from doom.

And thus in ruth a winged word said he :
“ Light of mine eyes are you returned to me,
Telemachus, whom since you went aboard
For Pylos, never more I thought to see.

“ Come, enter in, dear child, that I may warm
My heart with looking on you, safe from harm,
Within my house, new-come from foreign lands.
For seldom to the herdsmen and the farm

“ You come, but sojourn in the town, and thus
Watching the suitors’ concourse ruinous
Belike you take your pleasure.” Then to him
Spake and made answer wise Telemachus :

THE ODYSSEY

“So shall it be, O gossip, as you say ;
And for your sake am I come here to-day,
To see you with mine eyes, and hear your tale,
If in our halls my mother keeps alway,

“Or if another husband she has wed
Ere now, and empty lies Odysseus’ bed
With dusty spiders’ webs for covering.”
Then spake the master swineherd thus and said :

“Yea verily within your halls she keeps
With stedfast patient heart, and as she weeps
The nights and days for ever pass away
In lamentation while she wakes or sleeps.”

So saying, from his hand the brazen spear
The swineherd took : and entering, he strode clear
Of the stone threshold, while to give him place
His sire Odysseus rose as he drew near.

But from across the hut Telemachus
Withheld him from arising, saying thus :
“Be seated, stranger : we another seat
Will find in this house that belongs to us ;

“Here is the man shall set it.” So he spake ;
And he went back again his seat to take.
Then heaped the swineherd for him brushwood green
And fleeces over it, a couch to make.

BOOK SIXTEENTH

There sat Odysseus' son upon the floor,
And platters of roast flesh the swineherd bore
And set beside them, meat that they had left
Over from when they supped the night before :

And hastily beside them bread of wheat
In baskets heaped, and wine as honey sweet
Mixed in a bowl of ivy, and himself
Facing divine Odysseus took his seat.

So to the ready food before them spread
They reached their hands ; and after they had fed
Hunger and thirst to quench, Telemachus
To the bright swineherd uttered speech, and said :

“ Gossip, whence came this man your guest to be ?
And how did sailors bring him oversea
To Ithaca ? whom did they name themselves ?
For not afoot, as I suppose, came he.”

And answering spake you, herder of the swine,
Eumaeus : “ O my child, it shall be mine
The very truth to tell you. From wide Crete,
According to his tale, descends his line.

“ Through many towns of men from shore to shore
He says that he has wandered heretofore ;
For such the thread was that God spun for him :
Now to my steading he is come once more,

THE ODYSSEY

“ From a Thesprotian ship escaped away
A fugitive, whom in your hand I lay,
To deal with as you will ; howbeit he claims
The succour from you that a suppliant may.”

Then answered wise Telemachus again :
“ Eumaeus, to my heart is grief and pain
The word that you have uttered : how may I
At home the stranger fitly entertain ?

“ But young am I, nor is my strength full-grown
Yet against angry men to hold my own :
And now my mother wavers in her mind
Whether to keep the house with me alone,

“ Paying regard to her own marriage-vow
And what the people say, or follow now
Of the Achaean suitors in our halls
Him who is lordliest and will most allow.

“ But on the guest who sits your roof below
Fair raiment, shirt and cloak, will I bestow,
And give a two-edged sword and shoes to him,
And send him whither he is fain to go.

“ Then of your kindness keep him, I entreat,
Here on the farm, and entertainment meet
Provide ; and hither I will send for him
Raiment and all the bread that he shall eat :

BOOK SIXTEENTH

“ That upon you he may not bring expense
And on your fellows : but that he go hence
Among the suitors will I not allow,
In their exceeding folly and insolence ;

“ Lest they revile him, which thing were to me
Vexation sore ; and it may hardly be
That singly even a mighty man contend
With many, that are stronger far than he.”

But toil-worn bright Odysseus, when he heard,
Made answer, saying : “ O my friend, a word
I too may fitly utter ; for my heart
Much, as I listen, is within me stirred

“ To hear of all these deeds of ill intent
Whereon the suitors in your halls are bent
In your despite, so princely as you are :
Then tell me, does your will to theirs consent ?

“ Or do the folk on some God’s voice rely
That they regard you with an evil eye ?
Or on your brethren is the blame, in whom
A man for fighting trusts when strife runs high ?

“ Would that my years were, as my heart is, young,
And I a son from good Odysseus sprung !
Or that himself from wandering might return :
For still on future fate may hope be hung.

THE ODYSSEY

“Then would I choose that mine own head should fall
Under a foeman’s sword, if to the hall
Wherein Odysseus dwelt, Laertes’ son,
Coming, I dealt not bane to one and all.

“And if my single strength they overcame
By force of numbers, it were lesser shame
In my own house to be cut down and die
Than alway see these deeds of evil fame :

“The guest mishandled, and the women-thralls
In shameful fashion through the goodly halls
Dragged up and down, and the wine spilt abroad
And the bread eaten at their festivals,

“In wanton waste, and labour that they spend
Upon a work that comes not to an end.”
Then answered wise Telemachus and said :
“The very truth will I declare, O friend.

“Neither do all this folk my rule deny
And look upon me with an evil eye ;
Nor on my brethren is the blame, in whom
A man for fighting trusts when strife runs high.

“For thus it is ; to us, since time begun,
A line of only children Cronus’ son
Has given : one son alone Arceisias
Begot, Laertes ; and Laertes none

BOOK SIXTEENTH

“ Saving Odysseus only ; who, like them,
Me, the sole branch from out a single stem,
Begot, and left me helpless : wherefore now
The foes are many who our house condemn.

“ For all the island lords from Same come
And shrubbed Zacynthus and Dulichium,
And all who rule in rocky Ithaca,
To woo my mother and lay waste my home.

“ And she that hated bridal cannot break
Wholly, nor make them their pursuit forsake,
While they devouring waste away my house,
And soon of me a broken man will make.

“ Yet on the Gods’ knees lies the thing to be :
Now, gossip, you to chaste Penelope
Go with all speed and take her word that I
Am safe, and come from Pylos oversea.

“ But in this place will I myself remain :
Take word to her alone, and come again,
Letting none else of the Achaeans know,
For they are many who devise my bane.”

Then spake you, herder of the swine, and so
Made answer : “ This I understand and know,
And mark your bidding well : but tell me too,
And say expressly, whether I shall go

THE ODYSSEY

“ With these same tidings to the ill-starred one,
Laertes, who, though grieving for his son,
Yet for long time would oversee the farm,
Nor in the house amid the thralls would shun

“ To eat and drink, if so his heart were bent ;
But now, since you by ship to Pylos went,
They say he does not eat or drink at all,
Nor oversee the farm ; but with lament

“ And sighing sore he sits and makes his moan,
And his flesh wastes away to skin and bone.”
Then answering spake Telemachus the wise :
“ Hard fate ! but we must leave him yet alone,

“ Though grieving : for if men might choose the thing
They would and have it, then the day to bring
My father home my own first choice would be.
Afield to find him go not wandering,

“ But, your tale told, come hither as you were ;
Yet bid my mother send the housekeeper,
Her waiting-woman, secretly with speed,
That the old man may get the news from her.”

He spake, and stirred the swineherd up to go :
Who took and laced the shoes his feet below
And to the town went forth. But as the farm
He left, Athena did not fail to know ;

BOOK SIXTEENTH

And came anigh and stood beside the pair
In likeness of a woman tall and fair
And skilled in admirable handicraft,
And shewed herself before Odysseus there,

Facing the farmhouse doorway, plain to see ;
While by him stood Telemachus, but he
Saw her not, neither noted : for the Gods
Shew not themselves to all men visibly.

But the dogs saw and knew her shape divine,
And barked not at her, but with stifled whine
Across the courtyard cowering slunk away.
Then with her brows she made to him a sign :

And bright Odysseus marked it, and the hall
Left and came forth outside the courtyard wall,
Passing along it, and in front of her
Stood ; and Athena spake to him withal :

“ Son of Laertes, subtle-hearted one,
High-born Odysseus, speak now to your son
The word, nor hide it from him any more ;
So that you twain, when you the web have spun

“ That on the suitors death and weird shall lay,
May to the noble city take your way ;
Nor from beside you shall myself for long
Be absent, being eager for the fray.”

THE ODYSSEY

So saying, with the golden rod she bore
Athena touched him, and at once he wore
A well-washed cloak and shirt about his breast,
And younger was and bigger than before.

And his cheeks filled, and once again his skin
Bronzed, and the beard grew black about his chin ;
So she departed when she thus had wrought,
And to the hut Odysseus entered in.

But his own son beheld him all adread
And turned his eyes away discomfited,
Lest it might be a God he looked upon,
And uttering winged words he spake and said :

“Stranger, of other shape than erst you had
You seem now, and in other dress are clad,
And even your flesh is strange : some God you are
Of them that in wide heaven to live are glad.

“Be gracious to us then, that at your feet
We may lay offerings for acceptance meet
In sacrifice, and gifts of golden things
Well wrought : in mercy spare us, we entreat.”

But toilworn bright Odysseus made reply :
“Why liken me to them that do not die ?
No God, but your own father, for whose sake
You bear much sorrow and men’s wrong, am I.”

BOOK SIXTEENTH

So saying, he kissed his son, and on the floor
Ran down the tears he had held back before.
Nor even yet Telemachus believed
That his own father he beheld once more :

And in these words he made reply anew :
“Nay, not Odysseus, not my sire are you ;
But in some God’s enchantment am I held
That with yet sorer anguish I shall rue.

“For nowise may a man of mortal kind
Contrive such things in his unaided mind,
Except a God in person come to him,
Who lightly can, if he be thus inclined,

“Change old to young and young to old anon :
For surely you a little while ago
Were old and meanly clad, but now are like
The Gods who hold wide heaven and reign thereon.”

Then answered subtle-souled Odysseus thus :
“Unmeet it is that you, Telemachus,
At your own father’s presence overmuch
Should be amazed or deem it marvellous.

“Saving myself comes no Odysseus here ;
Who, such as now I am, in evil cheer
And after many wanderings, am come
To my own country in the twentieth year.

THE ODYSSEY

“ But this the work is of Athena’s hand,
The Forage-Driver : such as here I stand
She made me, for her will and power are one,
Awhile since like a beggar in the land,

“ And now like a young man clad daintily :
For to the Gods whose mansion is the sky
Easy it is a man of mortal race
Now to abase and now to magnify.”

Thus having spoken, down he sat again ;
But round his noble father’s neck amain
With tears and wailing fell Telemachus,
And lamentation brake from both the twain.

And weeping shrill of their desire was born
More clamorous than comes from birds forlorn,
Ospreys or vultures crooked-clawed, whose brood
Unfledged the peasants from the nest have torn.

So piteously they let the teardrops run
Under their brows ; and now had set the sun
Upon their weeping, but Telemachus
Thus to his father in swift speech begun :

“ But hither on what ship, O father mine,
Did mariners convey you on the brine
To Ithaca ? whom did they name themselves ?
For not on foot you came, as I divine.”

BOOK SIXTEENTH

And toilworn bright Odysseus made reply :

“O child, to you a true tale tell will I.

Phaeacian sailors brought me, they who give
Convoy to all men who their coast come nigh.

“They in a swift ship’s hull across the deep
To Ithaca conveyed me in my sleep,
And set on shore with splendid gifts, of bronze
And gold and woven cloths, a goodly heap.

“These, by the Gods’ will, in a cave are hid ;
But as the prompting of Athena bid
Am I come hither, that we may devise
By violent death our house from foes to rid.

“Now number up and give account to me
Of these same wooers, so that I may see
How many and what manner of men they are ;
That in my heart devising perfectly

“I may consider if we twain may still
Avail against these men of evil will
To hold our own, or whether we shall seek
Some other aid our purpose to fulfil.”

And sage Telemachus returned reply :

“Surely, my father, of your fame have I
Heard ever, how a warrior of your hands
You were, and in debate of wisdom high.

THE ODYSSEY

“ Yet is this word too great you say to me ;
Amazement fills me ; for it may not be
That two alone with many mighty men
May fight ; and of the suitors verily

“ Not ten nor twenty are there to lay low,
But many more ; their number you shall know :
Picked men out of Dulichium fifty-two,
With six retainers that behind them go ;

“ And out of Same warriors twenty-four,
Of sons of the Achaeans ; and a score
Out of Zacynthus ; and from Ithaca
Itself, all princely men, a dozen more ;

“ Besides the godlike minstrel, and withal
Medon the herald, and two squires at call
Skilful in carving ; if all these at once
We are to face in battle in our hall,

“ Bitter indeed I fear and dolorous
Will be your coming and your vengeance thus :
Say then, if any helper you can find
Who would bring succour with good will to us.”

But toilworn bright Odysseus answered : “ Yea,
That will I tell you : hear and mark, and say,
Will Lord Zeus and Athena joined with us
Suffice, or shall I seek some other stay ? ”

BOOK SIXTEENTH

And sage Telemachus returned reply :

“ Good helpers are the twain you name, though high
Among the clouds they sit ; for they have power
Over all men and Gods that do not die.”

But toilworn bright Odysseus spake again :

“ No long time shall those twain be absent then
From the grim war-cry, when within our halls
Is judged betwixt us and the suitor men

“ The might of Ares. Up now and away ;
Go homeward at the breaking of the day,
And with those wooers overmasterful
Consort ; but me the swineherd shall convey

“ Hereafter to the town, like one to see
Made wretched by old age and beggary.
Then let your heart endure within your breast
When in my house they shall mishandle me :

“ Yea, even if along the palace-floor
They drag me by the feet, and out of door
Fling me, or strike me with things thrown at me,
Do you look on and bear this one wrong more.

“ And only bid them from their folly stay,
Speaking soft words their fury to allay.
Howbeit they will not hear you ; for their doom
Stands close beside them, and the fatal day.

THE ODYSSEY

“ And this I tell you also, and take heed
To mark it well : if mine you are indeed
And of our blood, let no man hear that I
Odysseus am within the house at need.

“ Not to Laertes let this news be known,
Nor to the swineherd or the thralls we own,
Or even Penelope, until we learn
The women’s temper, you and I alone.

“ Among the men who are our thralls might we
Make trial likewise, with intent to see
Who fears and honours us at heart, and who
Recks not, and slights you, princely though you be.”

Then spake his lordly son and answered so :
“ O father, of my courage you shall know,
I trust, hereafter ; for I bear in me
No slackness of intent against the foe.

“ But this I bid you ponder : for us twain
I think there is no profit hence to gain.
Passing from farm to farm to prove each man
Long may you go about and all in vain ;

“ While in your halls in pride and ease they sit
Devouring all your wealth and spare no whit.
Yet of the women I would have you prove
Which mock your honour, and which reverence it.

BOOK SIXTEENTH

“But for the men in our demesne that go,
I would not counsel you to prove them so.
Deal with this afterward, if you in truth
Some sign from Zeus the Thunder-bearer know.”

In such wise the discourse between them grew,
The while to Ithaca from seaward drew
The well-built ship that bare Telemachus
Back out of Pylos home with all his crew.

So when within the haven deep once more
They entered, the black ship they hauled ashore
While the proud squires their harness took ; and straight
To Clytius' house the splendid gifts they bore.

Only a herald they sent on, that he
Might tell the news to wise Penelope,
Up in the palace, how Telemachus
Abode afield, and bade his company

Sail to the city, lest through inward dread
The mighty Queen a tender tear might shed ;
And they, the herald and the swineherd bright,
Met, being on the selfsame errand sped.

And when they reached the royal palace, then
The herald, where amid her bondwomen
She sat, went in, and said : “To-day, O Queen,
Is your own son from Pylos come again.”

THE ODYSSEY

But drawing nigh, the swineherd told her all
Her son had bid him tell her ; and withal,
When he had given his message, to the swine
Went back and left the courtyard and the hall.

Meanwhile the suitors in vexation sore
With downcast faces from the palace floor
Rose, and along the great main courtyard wall
Came out, and sat them down before the door.

Then speech began among his fellows thus
Eurymachus the son of Polybus :
“ O friends, Telemachus a mighty deed
Has done by mastery in despite of us ;

“ This journey that we said might never be.
Now let us launch our best black ship to sea,
And man her oars with sailors who shall take
Those others word to come back speedily.”

Ere he had ended, from his place aside
Turning, Amphinomus the ship espied
Within the harbour deep, the men in her
The sails upfurling while the oars they plied.

And lightly laughing to the rest he spake :
“ No word need go : see where the port they make !
Either some God has told them, or the ship
Passing they saw but could not overtake.”

BOOK SIXTEENTH

So said he, and they rose without delay
And passing to the margent of the bay
Speedily hauled the black ship up on land,
While the proud squires their harness bore away.

Thence to the market-place they every one
Went in a crowd together, and let none
Sit down beside them, were he young or old ;
Then spake Antinous thus, Eupeithes' son :

“ Lo you now, how the Gods this man set free
From his destruction that was planned to be !
Upon the windy headlands all day long
Sat watchers in a row perpetually.

“ And when the sun had set, not any sleep
Took we on land, but cruising on the deep
In our swift ship abode the shining Dawn,
Our ambush for Telemachus to keep ;

“ That we might take him unawares, and lo,
Safe to his home a God has made him go.
Now let us here an evil end for him
Devise, and let him not escape us so.

“ Since our work scarcely may fulfilment find
While he is yet alive : for sage of mind
And well advised he is ; and now to us
The people are no longer wholly kind.

THE ODYSSEY

“Come then, before he call to hear his case
All the Achaeans to the market-place ;
For then I trow he will not spare to vent
His anger, but arising face to face

“Proclaim among them how we plotted thus
Against his life an onset murderous,
But missed him : and they hearing will condemn
Our evil deeds, that harm shall come to us,

“And we from our own land be far and wide
Cast forth among an alien folk to bide.
Now let us haste to take him in the field
Far from the town, or by the highway-side.

“Then shall we have ourselves his wealth and fee,
Divided all among us equally ;
But to his mother we will give this house
With him to dwell in who her lord shall be.

“But if this word displease you, and you will
He live, and keep his patrimony still,
Let us no more henceforth assemble here
Devouring all his substance to the fill ;

“But let each one departing from his gate
Woo her with bride-gifts from his own estate ;
And let her wed thereafter him who brings
Most gifts, and is appointed her by fate.”

BOOK SIXTEENTH

So spake he ; and in silence every one
Sat dumb, until amid them speech begun
Amphinomus, the offspring glorious
Of Nisus the high prince, Aretias' son :

Who from Dulichium's wheat-clad grassy land
Came and was chief among the suitor band,
And with his words best pleased Penelope ;
For he was quick of wit to understand.

A well-meant word he spake and uttered thus :
“ O friends, I would not slay Telemachus :
No light thing is it a king's seed to slay.
Inquire we first how the Gods counsel us.

“ And if the oracles of Zeus most high
Approve it, I will give consent he die ;
Yea, slay him my own self : but if the Gods
Dissuade, I bid you put your purpose by.”

So spake Amphinomus ; and deeming good
The counsel he had given them, up they stood,
And going back into Odysseus' house
Sat down upon the chairs of polished wood.

And now once more Penelope the wise
Took counsel to appear before the eyes
Of the proud suitors, knowing they were set
Within her son's destruction to devise.

THE ODYSSEY

For being made aware of their intent,
Medon the herald told her : so she went
Amid her waiting-women into hall,
And where the wooers sat her way she bent.

There in the house well-builed by the door
That bright of women standing held before
Her cheeks the glittering kerchief, and by name
Spake to Antinous thus and chid him sore :

“Antinous full of scorn, ill deeds who do,
The people say in Ithaca that you
Of all your generation are the first
In speech and counsel : but it is not true.

“O greedy-hearted, why contrive you thus
Death and destruction for Telemachus,
Paying no reverence to the suppliants' right
Over whom Zeus is witness ? and for us

“The one against the other harm to plot
Is an unholy thing : yea, know you not
How your own father came a fugitive
Hither, when fear in him the folk begot ?

“Right wroth they were against him, for that he,
Joining with Taphian pirates of the sea,
Upon the people of Thesprotia
Made raids, with whom confederate were we.

BOOK SIXTEENTH

“Therefore they gladly would have spilled his blood,
And utterly devoured his livelihood
That was right plenteous ; but Odysseus then
Held them aback, and their desire withstood.

“And now his house in scorn you overrun
And woo his wife and seek to slay his son,
Grieving me sorely : then, I counsel you,
Have done with this and bid the rest have done.”

Then spake in answer to her, saying thus,
Eurymachus the son of Polybus :
“Icarius’ daughter, wise Penelope,
Take comfort, nor distress yourself for us.

“None is there now or henceforth, nor, I pray,
Ever may be, who violent hand shall lay
Upon your son Telemachus, while I
Live upon earth and see the light of day.

“This say I and it surely shall be so ;
About my spear-point his dark blood shall flow :
Since oft Odysseus, stormer of the town,
Upon his knees has held me long ago,

“To lay the roast flesh in my hands and set
The red wine to my lips ; and thus is yet
Telemachus most dear of men to me ;
Nor need he tremble lest his death he get

THE ODYSSEY

“From us the suitors ; yet may none defend
Life from such peril as the Gods may send.”
So said he, comforting her, but himself
Plotted to bring him to an evil end.

So to the upper chambers glittering-fair
Ascended she and fell to weeping there
For her own lord Odysseus, till sweet sleep
Upon her lids grey-eyed Athena bare.

And meanwhile to Odysseus and his son
Came the bright swineherd ere the day was done ;
Who from a yearling hog that they had killed
Were carving pieces round for every one.

But standing close Laertes' son before,
Athena struck him with the rod she bore
And turned him back into an aged man,
And made ill-favoured the attire he wore :

That his own lord the swineherd might not know
When he beheld him, and with tidings go
To chaste Penelope, nor keep it hid.
Then first Telemachus bespake him so :

“Here come you, bright Eumaeus ! tell me then
What rumour stirs in town ? are those proud men
Back from their ambush and within, or still
Watching for me as I come home again ?”

BOOK SIXTEENTH

And answering spake you, herder of the swine,
Eumaeus : “ No concern it was of mine,
As I went down the city, to inquire
Or ask of these things : this was my design,

“ The message to deliver given to me
And return hither quickly as might be.
But on the way a herald from your crew
Met me, a swift-foot messenger ; and he

“ First to your mother came, his word to say :
Howbeit of one thing else be sure I may,
For mine eyes saw it : being above the town
Where is the hill of Hermes, on my way,

“ I saw a swift ship into harbour go
Crowded with men, and bristling high and low
With shields and two-edged spears : and these were they,
After my deeming ; but I do not know.”

So spake he ; and the prince's sacred grace
Looked in his father's eyes with smiling face,
But shunned the swineherd's. So when they from work
Had ceased, they set the banquet in its place.

Nor lacked a soul there of the banquet spread
His equal share : and after they had fed
Hunger and thirst to quench, the gift of sleep
They took and turned them well content to bed.

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